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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Sovereign God, Your kingdom cannot be shaken, for You are King of kings and Lord of lords. Thank You for inviting us to ask and receive, to seek and find, and to knock for doors to open. Lord, forgive us when we have forfeited Your blessings because of our failure to ask.

Today, empower our Senators to seek Your wisdom and guidance. May they not depend only on their gifts and abilities, but remember that without Your involvement they labor in vain. May they strive to be Your ambassadors of renewal and reconciliation. Steady their hands to grasp freedom's torch and illuminate the darkness of our Nation and world.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRASSLEY). The majority leader is recognized.

A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we begin this week by remembering a failed idea from the past—ObamaCare—and we will end by passing balanced budget legislation about the future.

Five years ago today, a partisan ObamaCare bill was signed into law over the objections of the American people. It was rushed through in defiance of the experts who warned it would result in higher costs, fewer choices, and broken promises for the middle class. And, tragically, that is just what we have seen.

Millions of Americans lost health plans they were promised they could keep, premiums spiked, deductibles skyrocketed, tax time became even more of a burden, and often a costlier one as well, and for too many, family doctors and trusted hospitals fell out of network.

All we have to do is listen to letters such as Karen's from Louisville to know that Americans deserve better than what ObamaCare has given them.

Karen was paying $325 a month for her health insurance. But now, she says her premium has spiked to almost $550 a month with a deductible well in excess of $6,000. ''I cannot afford this,'' Karen wrote, ''but I do not have a choice. It scares me to think what will happen if I do get sick.''

That is Karen's story, and it is hardly unique.

Every Member in this body should be striving for something better—something better—than the pain of ObamaCare. And we can. By passing a balanced budget that is about the future, we can leave ObamaCare's higher costs and broken promises where they belong—in the past—and start fresh with real health reform. That is just one of the many reasons for Senators who support the balanced budget now before us. It is a budget that recognizes serious fiscal and economic challenges that are facing our country and works to address them in a commonsense way.

Americans know that Washington can't tax away the challenges confronting us, and Americans know Washington can't ignore away the problems confronting us, either. Americans also know that every dollar spent on interest for the growing national debt is essentially wasted. Every dollar spent on interest is one less dollar for Social Security or for helping those who truly need it or for tax relief.

That is why the balanced budget before us is premised on a simple truth—that Washington has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. I know this can be hard for some to acknowledge, but politicians have a duty to the American people to simply admit it. They owe it to the American people to explain why the kind of budget blueprints we have seen from the White House are just so totally unserious. President Obama's budgets skip the tough choices, keep spending more money we don't have, contain massive tax increases, and never balance—ever. They never balance—ever.

Contrast that to the budget before the Senate today. It balances, it does so without raising taxes, and it is the result of open and transparent committee work led by Chairman MIKE ENZI.

This budget is another example of the new Senate getting back to work for the American people. It is another example of the new Senate moving past failed ideas from the past, such as ObamaCare, and positioning America for the future instead.

This balanced budget is all about growing an economy that can work better for the middle class of today and leaving a more prosperous future to the middle class of tomorrow. It will also provide the procedural tools, via the budget reconciliation process, to bring an end to the nightmare of ObamaCare. That is something all of us should want.

So since our friends across the aisle have decided not to offer a budget of their own, I would invite them to join us—to join us in supporting the growth-oriented and balanced budget that is before us now.

● This ''bullet'' symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to S. Con. Res. 11.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 31, S. Con. Res. 11, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 11) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time used for my opening statement not count against the budget resolution time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as the Republican leader mentioned, it is hard to believe that 5 years have gone by since we passed the Affordable Care Act—but it is true. It has been 5 years. We recall back to that cold winter day when we were able finally to get it done.

But to me it doesn't seem that long ago. The memories of what took place to get where we did to pass that are very fresh in my mind. It wasn't an easy feat. Presidents going back to Truman and Eisenhower had tried to pass legislation dealing with health care, and they were all unable to do it. So it was really a great accomplishment that Congress could pass this legislation.

It wouldn't be a stretch to say that President Obama risked his Presidency by pushing for health care reform. It was really a defining moment for many people.

Republican opposition at the time was overwhelming. No matter what we as Democrats did or tried to do, there was nothing we could do to get Republicans to join us in giving health care to the American people, even though the original health care bill we passed was patterned after Republican proposals. So we worked hard, and we got it done. We pled for help, and we got none. Republicans simply were not interested in working with us to fix our Nation's health care system.

Outside the Capitol, a sophisticated and dishonest public relations campaign costing huge amounts of money was being waged against ObamaCare by political operatives, lobbyists, insurance companies, and many others. We pressed on, and we did the very best we could, and it was pretty good. Was it perfect? Of course not. No legislation is. But what we eventually passed was and still is good for America.

I was very surprised to hear my friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, talk about a woman from Kentucky. That is very unusual, since 400,000 people in Kentucky today have insurance because of ObamaCare that they didn't have before.

Five years later, I am very proud of the work we did. I am just as proud today as I was when President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law. ObamaCare is reducing costs, expanding access, and protecting individuals with preexisting disabilities.

Look at just a few of the things it has done.

Some 16.4 million Americans now have quality health care coverage—16.4 million.

The United States has seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate—probably ever, but we will use just for purposes of illustration—in decades.

In the last 18 months, the uninsured rate for nonelderly adults has fallen by 35 percent. That is stunning.

Health care costs have grown at their slowest level in some 50 years.

Now listen to this. Patient safety initiatives are keeping Americans safe. Since we passed this legislation, the number of preventable deaths at hospitals and care centers has dropped by 50,000 people. That is 50,000 people who are alive today who wouldn't have been had it not been for ObamaCare. That is just one aspect of the people who are alive today because of ObamaCare who would not have been otherwise.

But for all of the incredible national statistics that are available, the best evidence that the Affordable Care Act is working can be found in our homes, our neighborhoods, and our communities.

This year in Nevada, ObamaCare is making a real difference in the lives of about 73,000 people who signed up for coverage through the health care insurance marketplace. Frankly, Nevada got off to a really slow start because they had a contract in the State with Xerox and they did such an awful job. The Republican Governor of the State of Nevada—I have applauded him in the past and I will do it again—was very courageous. He stepped forward and has made a huge difference in Nevada. Not only are Nevadans getting covered, but they are getting tax breaks, also. Some 65,000 Nevadans who selected a plan on the marketplace qualified for an average tax credit of $242 per month. No matter what standard we use, that is real money in the pockets of Nevadans who are still recovering from the economic downturn because of what happened on Wall Street. There are stories just like this all across America.

After 5 years, it is as clear as ever that the Affordable Care Act is working. Americans are benefiting from increased health coverage, lower costs, and improved efficiency.

Again, 16.4 million Americans have quality health coverage. Since 2013, the United States has seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate in decades. In the last 18 months, the uninsured rate for nonelderly adults has fallen by 35 percent. Health care costs have grown at their slowest rate in 50 years. Patient safety initiatives are keeping Americans safe. Since 2011, the number of preventable deaths at hospitals and care centers has dropped by 50,000.

The ranking member of the Budget Committee is on the floor today. One of the great things we do not talk much about in the Affordable Care Act is community health centers. The good man from Vermont, the junior Senator from Vermont, came to me and talked to me about community health centers. As a result of his advocacy, we put lots of money—about $11 billion—in the Affordable Care Act for community health centers. It has changed the health care delivery system in America significantly. We must continue that program.

The Affordable Care Act, for all the reasons we have mentioned, is something that is really important. It is important that everyone understand how absolutely fantastic it was for the people of this country. After 5 years, it is clear it is working. Americans are benefitting from increased coverage, lower costs, and improved efficiency.

I invite my Republican colleagues to accept that ObamaCare is the law of the land. Put aside the unrealistic notions of repealing a law of which 16.4 million people now have health care. Are we going to just drop them, because the Republican plans would just basically drop them all?

Instead, Republicans should join with us to help even more Americans get the help they need. Perhaps, then, 5 years from now Democrats and Republicans can look back with pride, knowing that together we helped make a good law even better for all Americans.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I will begin by propounding some unanimous consent requests. I think these have been agreed to on both sides.

First, I ask unanimous consent that, for the duration of the Senate's consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, the majority and Democratic managers of the concurrent resolution, while seated or standing at the managers' desks, be permitted to deliver floor remarks, retrieve, review, and edit documents, and send email and other data communications from text displayed on wireless personal digital assistant devices and tablet devices. I further ask unanimous consent that the use of calculators be permitted on the floor during consideration of the budget resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. For the information of Senators, this UC does not alter the existing traditions that prohibit the use of such devices in the Chamber by Senators in general, officers, and staff. It also does not allow the use of videos or pictures, the transmitting of sound, even through earpieces, for any purposes, the use of telephones or other devices for voice communications, any laptop computers, any detachable keyboards, the use of desktop computers, or any other larger devices.

Further, I ask unanimous consent that the initial debate time on the budget resolution be allocated as follows: time until 1 p.m. equally divided between the managers or their designees; 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. under the control of the majority; 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. under the control of the minority; 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. under the control of the majority; 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. under the control of the minority; 5 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time spent in quorum calls requested during the budget resolution be equally divided and come off the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, last week, the Senate Budget Committee took an important first step in helping to change the way we do business here in Washington—by reporting out a balanced budget.

This week, we take the next step as the Senate begins debating how best to make the government live within its means and set spending limits for our Nation. But we are running out of time, and unless we do something soon, our Nation will be overspending nearly $1 trillion a year. Now, that is actually $1,000 billion a year. A trillion dollars makes it sound rather trivial. It is $1,000 billion a year of overspending.

Hard-working taxpayers are paying attention. In fact, 24 States have already passed a constitutional balanced budget amendment, and there are 10 more that are working on it. If all of these States pass similar measures, we will have 34 States needed for a constitutional convention on a balanced budget and we will be forced to act as they desire. ''If it isn't all of you,'' they are saying, ''it will be all of us.''

Well, we are elected to represent our constituents. In the face of such demands, we should act or someday it will be out of our hands.

One of the best ways to balance our budget is to make our government more efficient, effective, and accountable. If Congress does its job, we can have some flexibility and eliminate what is not working, starting with the worst first. Then we can eliminate waste and streamline what is left.

But to do this, first Congress must do something it has not done in the past 8 years; that is, scrutinize every dollar for which they have responsibility. Actually, with the billions of dollars we spend every single year, they will be lucky to scrutinize every million dollars.

If government programs are not delivering results, they should be improved; and if they are not needed, they should be eliminated. It is time to prioritize and demand results from our government programs.

Through the process of getting the budget together, I discovered that we had 260 programs that have not been authorized. What is an authorization? Well, the committees are the people who are kind of experts or at least have a very concentrated concern over that particular area. They pass the new programs—the details of the new programs: the amount that can be spent on those programs, the way we can measure whether they are getting things done.

I discovered that 260 of those programs that we are still funding have expired. Their authorization ran out. One thing that is in those authorizations is some kind of a sunset date; and we have passed the sunset date on 260 programs. So what? We are only overspending, according to the authorization, $293 billion a year on expired programs.

Yes, some of those programs are absolutely essential. What we need to do, though, is have those committees that have the expertise go back and review them and reauthorize them and set the new limits and the new matrix for what they are supposed to be doing so we can tell if they are doing their job. Mr. President, 260 programs—one of them expired in 1983; a whole bunch of them expired before this century. So we know this will be a challenge for every single Member of Congress. But I believe we are up to the task because the American people are counting on us.

This week hard-working taxpayers will also get to see something they have been waiting to see; and that is an open and transparent legislative process that will see Members from both sides of the aisle offering, debating, and ultimately voting on amendments to this resolution.

Senate Republicans will offer amendments that will enhance fiscal discipline, build a strong national defense, boost our economic growth, tackle ObamaCare, protect education, and help make our government more efficient, effective, and accountable to hard-working taxpayers.

What this budget does do. We will also hear people say what this budget does and what it does not do. But here is what this budget does do: It balances the budget in 10 years with no tax hikes. It protects our most vulnerable citizens. It strengthens the national defense. It improves economic growth and opportunity for hard-working families. It slows the rate of spending growth.

It preserves Social Security by reducing spending in other areas to fully offset Social Security's rising deficits and encourages our Nation's leaders to begin a bipartisan, bicameral discussion on how to protect and save Social Security and avoid the across-the-board Social Security benefit cuts that could occur under current law. It protects our seniors by safeguarding Medicare from insolvency and extending the life of the Medicare trust fund by 5 years. It ensures Medicare savings in the President's health care law are dedicated to Medicare, instead of seeing those changes go to other programs and more overspending.

It continues funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, and creates a new program based on CHIP to serve low-income, working-age, able-bodied adults and children who are eligible for Medicaid. It increases State flexibility in designing benefits and administering Medicaid programs to ensure efficiency and reduce wasteful spending and provides stable and predictable funding so long-term services and supports are sustainable both for the Federal Government and the States.

So as we begin this debate this week, it is worth noting that the strong economic growth a balanced budget can provide will serve as the foundation for helping all Americans grow and prosper. A balanced budget allows Americans to spend more time working hard to grow their businesses or advance their jobs, instead of worrying about taxes and inefficient and ineffective regulations. Most importantly, it means every American who wants to find a good-paying job and a fulfilling career has the opportunity to do just that.

There are problems, however, with the family budget. Family income is not growing as it should, and this has dire consequences for our future. If family income does not grow, it becomes very difficult for parents to pay for their children's education and for their own training needs. Likewise, slow family income growth means less money set aside for retirement, health care, a downpayment on a house, and money to get the next generation started.

Because job growth has been so slow since the beginning of the recovery, it is not surprising that income growth has been slow too. A lot of people fail to note that when jobs and incomes slow down together, the real victims are your hopes, your dreams, and your aspirations. Moreover, these trends of slow growth in jobs and incomes are relatively related and recent.

Hardly anyone listening to me today would be confused by the term ''family income.'' It clearly means the cash that families receive from their jobs and their investments. It is the stuff that goes into a savings account, into a retirement plan, into education for the kids, into the household rainy day fund. You can count it, and it is tangible.

One of the other things I discovered as I was going through this process is we have some things we call trust funds. I have discovered that you better not trust them. There is no cash in the trust funds. Normally that would be investments that can be withdrawn and the bills paid. I think if we really were doing a financial statement for the Federal Government, we would have to move those trust funds over to accounts payable because what is backing them is the full faith and credit of the Federal Government. I hope we can make it so that is full faith and credit. That is why we need to change some of the things we are doing right now.

Last year, we spent $231 billion on interest. That is on an $18 trillion debt. In the President's budget, that is proposed to go to $780 billion. That is more than we are spending on defense, more than we are spending on education, more than we are spending on almost any other function the Federal Government does. If $230 billion is 1 percent, what happens if we go to the normal rate of 5 percent? Oh, goodness, we only get to make choices here on $1,100 billion. So virtually all the money we have would go to interest—no national defense, no education, no other function that the Federal Government is involved in.

Our overspending is killing us. Yes, there are two ways you can reduce overspending. One is to cut spending; the other one is to raise taxes. We are already collecting more money than we ever have in the history of the United States. So how are we going to solve this problem of the interest itself from bankrupting us? This budget is designed to put us on a path to do that. It will not solve everything. We have only had about 8 weeks to do what has not been done in the budget for 6 years. So I hope you will bear with us during the course of this process.

I am an accountant. I am also chair of the Senate Budget Committee, and we have started the monumental task of confronting America's chronic overspending, tackling our Nation's surging debt, and balancing our Nation's budget.

Incidentally, under the President's budget, the overspending this year is $468 billion. Remember when we used to make decisions on $1,100 billion? If the Constitutional Convention that I talked about that the States are putting together were in place—there are 24 already; another 10 makes it mandatory—we would have to cut 50 percent. We are not able to do that. It was tough enough to balance the budget over a 10-year period. That is a tremendous task we have ahead of us if we are going to take care of balancing our Nation's debt and bringing it down to where it is a manageable level, where we can afford the interest on it.

Before coming to Congress, I ran a small business in Wyoming for many years. I served as a mayor in my hometown and then served in the legislature. One of the most important roles I had was to ensure that my budgets were balanced every year. In time, we were even able to build some rainy-day accounts in Wyoming. So far, there has never been a crisis so bad that it has rained. It is time to begin this responsible accounting in Washington because while we can lie about the numbers, the numbers never lie.

The worst kept secret in America is that this administration is spending more than ever and taxing more than ever. The President's budget increases taxes dramatically and still doesn't get us to a balanced budget. In fact, that $468 billion in overspending this year—in the 10th year, he projects $1 trillion, which is $1,000 billion overspent. It never goes down. It keeps going up. We have to reverse that trend.

The Federal Government should spend your tax dollars wisely and responsibly and give you the freedom and control to pursue your future in the way you choose. Hard-working taxpayers deserve a government that is more efficient, more effective, and more accountable. That should be something on which both parties can agree because I never heard anybody say they wanted a more inefficient, ineffective, and unaccountable government.

Runaway spending habits over the past 6 years have created a dangerously growing debt because the habit of spending now and paying later is deeply ingrained. Actually, under the President's budget, it isn't even paying later that is included. Federal deficits have hit record highs. We have overspent nearly $1 trillion a year—that is $1,000 billion. The more Washington spends, the more debt we owe and the more is added to what future generations would have to pay.

Today, America's debt totals $18 trillion. In fact, every man, woman, and child now owes more than $56,000 on that debt. The number is expected to grow to more than $75,000 over the next decade unless we make important changes. Yes, that is every man, woman, and child. That means somebody born this morning owes $56,000 on that debt.

Every dollar spent on interest on our debt is another dollar we won't be able to use for government services, for individuals in need, or another dollar that won't be available to taxpayers for their own needs.

It is time to stop talking and start acting. Washington has to live within its means, just as hard-working families do every day. We have to deliver a more effective and accountable government to the American people that supports them when it must and gets out of the way when it should. We didn't get here overnight, and we won't be able to fix it overnight, but we can begin to solve this crisis if we act now.

The Republicans put forward a responsible plan that balances the budget in 10 years with no tax hikes. It protects our most vulnerable citizens, strengthens our national defense, and improves economic growth and opportunity for hard-working families. A balanced budget means real accountability in Washington and ensures that programs actually accomplish what they set out to deliver—which goes back to my statement about 260 programs that have expired that we are still funding to the tune of $293 billion. A balanced budget supports economic growth for hard-working families and creates real opportunity for all Americans to grow and prosper. A balanced budget allows Americans to spend more time working hard to grow their businesses or to advance their jobs instead of worrying about taxes and inefficient, ineffective regulations that drive down their opportunities. It also means our job creators can find new opportunities to expand our economy. Most importantly, it means every American who wants to have a good-paying job and a fulfilling career has the opportunity to do that. That is what a balanced budget means for our Nation, and it is what the American people deserve.

Congress is under new management, and by working together to find shared ground with commonsense solutions, we can deliver real results and have real progress.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Thank you, Madam President. Let me begin by commenting on a few of the thoughts raised by my good friend Senator ENZI.

Senator ENZI says the economy today is not where it should be, and he is right. I don't think anybody thinks the economy is where it should be in terms of low unemployment and high wages—no debate about that. But I ask the American people to think back 6½ years ago, at the end of President Bush's term, to what the economy was like. At that point, we were not gaining the 200,000 jobs a month we are gaining now; we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. At that point, the deficit was not at $480 billion, where it is today; it was at $1.4 trillion. At that point, the stock market was not soaring, as it is today; the American and world financial system was on the verge of collapse. So let's begin by putting issues into perspective.

No, nobody I know thinks we are where we should be economically in America today, but anybody who does not understand that despite enormous Republican obstructionism, we have made significant gains over the last 6½ years would, I believe, be very mistaken.

As we all know, the Federal budget we are working on now is not an appropriations bill. It does not provide explicit funding for this or that agency. What it does do is lay the foundation for that process, the total amount of money the appropriations committees have to spend. In other words, this budget is more than just a very long list of numbers. The Federal budget is about our national priorities and our values. It is about who we are as a nation and what we stand for. It is about how we analyze and assess the problems we face and how we go forward in resolving those problems. That is the task the Senate is now about to undertake, and it is a very serious responsibility.

Let's be very clear. No family, no business, no local or State government can responsibly write a budget without first understanding the problems and the challenges it faces. That is even more true when we deal with a Federal budget of some $4 trillion.

As I examine the budgets brought forth by the Republicans in the House and here in the Senate, this is how I see their analysis of the problems facing our country. At a time of massive wealth and income inequality, perhaps the most important issue facing this country—a huge transfer of wealth from the middle class to the top one-tenth of 1 percent. My Republican colleagues apparently believe the richest people in America need to be made even richer.

It is apparently not good enough for my Republican colleagues that 99 percent of all new income today is going to the top 1 percent—not good enough.

It is apparently not good enough that the top one-tenth of 1 percent today own almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. Clearly, in the eyes of my Republican colleagues, the wealthy and the powerful and the big campaign contributors need even more help. Not only should they not be asked to pay more in taxes, not only should we not eliminate huge loopholes that benefit the wealthy and large corporations, some of my Republican friends believe we should protect these loopholes, not change them at all or maybe even make them wider.

It is apparently not good enough that corporate America is enjoying record-breaking profits and that the CEOs of large corporations earn some 290 times what their average employees make—290 times more.

It is apparently not good enough that since 1985, the top one-tenth of 1 percent has seen a more than $8 trillion increase in its wealth than it would have if wealth and equality had remained the same as it was in 1985—an $8 trillion dollar increase in wealth going to the top one-tenth of 1 percent. But apparently my Republican colleagues not only do not talk about this issue, they will do nothing to address the massive wealth inequality this country faces.

It is apparently not good enough for my Republican colleagues that the wealthiest 14 people in this country—14 people—have seen their wealth go up by more than $157 billion over the past 2 years alone. Fourteen people saw an increase in their wealth of $157 billion, and the Republican budget talks about cutting food stamps and education and nutrition, because we are presumably a poor nation. Well, we are not a poor nation. We just have massive wealth and income inequality, so that the vast majority of people are becoming poorer but the people on top are predominantly wealthy. That is the reality we must address.

As manifested in the House and Senate budgets, my Republican colleagues are ignoring a very significant reality, and that is that millions of middle-class and working families are people who are often working longer hours for lower wages and have seen significant declines in their standard of living over the past 40 years. My Republican colleagues say those people who are struggling, those people who are trying to feed their families, those people who are trying to send their kids to college—those are not the people we should be helping; rather, we have to worry about the top 1 percent.

At a time when over 45 million Americans are living in poverty, which is more than at almost any time in the modern history of our country—and many of these people are working people, people who are working 40 or 50 hours a week at substandard wages—my Republican colleagues think we should increase poverty by ending the Affordable Care Act, by slashing Medicaid, and by cutting food stamps and the earned-income tax credit.

At a time when almost 20 percent of our kids live in poverty—the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world—my Republican colleagues think that maybe we should even raise that poverty rate a little bit among our children by cutting childcare, by cutting Head Start, by cutting the refundable child tax credit, and maybe let's even go after nutrition programs for hungry children.

To summarize, the rich get much richer and the Republicans think they need more help. The middle-class and working families of this country become poorer and the Republicans think we need to cut programs they desperately need. Frankly, those may be the priorities of some of my Republican colleagues, but I do not believe those are the priorities of the American people.

Today, the United States safely remains the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all people as a right. Today, despite the modest gains in the Affordable Care Act, we still have about 40 million Americans who lack health insurance and millions more who are underinsured.

What is the Republican response to the health care crisis? They want to abolish—do away with completely—the Affordable Care Act and take away the health insurance that 16 million Americans have gained through that program.

Here we have 40 million people who have no health insurance and the Republican response is: Well, let's make it 56 million people. And if you add the massive cuts they proposed to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, even millions more would lose their health insurance.

Does anybody, for 1 second, think this vaguely makes any sense in the real world? People are struggling to try to find health insurance and the response is: Oh, let's cut 16 million people off of the Affordable Care Act and millions more off of Medicaid.

While the Senate budget resolution does not end Medicare as we know it, unlike the House budget last year, it does make significant cuts. Further, when you make massive cuts to Medicaid, it is not only low-income people who suffer, you are also cutting the nursing home care for seniors. These are elderly people—80, 90 years of age—in a nursing home, and one might argue these people are the most vulnerable people in this country, the most helpless people, fragile people, and we are going to cut programs for them.

I have talked a little bit about the devastating impact the House and Senate Republican budgets would have on the American people, but I think it is equally important, when we look at a budget, to talk about not only what a budget does but talk about what a budget does not do, the serious problems it does not address.

Poll after poll tells us the American people, when asked what their major concerns are, almost always respond: It is jobs, wages, and the economy. That is, generally speaking, what Democrats, Republicans, and Independents respond. It is the economy, jobs, and wages.

Despite a significant improvement in the economy over the last 6 years, real employment today is not 5.5 percent, it is 11 percent, counting those people who have given up looking for work and those people who are working part time. Youth employment, an issue we almost never discuss, is at 17 percent, and African-American youth employment is much higher than that.

What the American people want—and what the Republican budget completely ignores—is the need to create millions of decent-paying jobs. I think if you go to Maine, to Vermont, to Wyoming, to California and ask people what they want, they would say: We need more jobs, and those jobs should be paying us a living wage.

In my view—and in the view of many economists—if we are serious about creating jobs in this country, the fastest way to do it is to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, our roads, bridges, water systems, wastewater plants, airports, rail, dams, levees, broadband in rural areas.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, we need to invest over $3 trillion by the year 2020 just to get our Nation's infrastructure in good repair. When we make a significant investment in an infrastructure, we create millions of decent-paying jobs, which is exactly what we should be doing and what our side of the aisle will fight for, but it is an issue virtually ignored by the Republican majority. Crumbling infrastructure, need to create jobs—they don't talk about it.

At a time when millions of Americans are working for starvation wages and when the Federal minimum wage is at an abysmal $7.25 an hour, we need a budget that substantially increases wages for low-income and middle-income workers. In the year 2015, no one who works in this country for 40 hours a week should be living in poverty. I would hope that is a tenet all of us can agree on. No one should be making the totally inadequate Federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour.

Raising the minimum wage to at least $10.10 an hour—I personally would go higher than that—would not only be good for low-wage workers, it would reduce spending on Medicaid, public housing, food stamps, and other Federal programs by some $7 billion a year.

Sadly, when I offered an amendment in committee that called for a substantial increase in the minimum wage, not one of my Republican colleagues voted for it.

Well, we are going to give them an opportunity to rethink the error of their ways. We are going to bring an amendment onto the floor to do exactly what the American people want; that is, significantly increase the minimum wage in this country, so no one who works 40 hours a week lives in poverty.

We also need pay equity in this country so women do not make 78 cents on the dollar compared to what a man makes for doing the same work. Further, we need to address the overtime scandal in this country in which many of our people are working 50 or 60 hours a week but fail to get time and a half for their efforts.

I haven't heard—I sat through all of the committee meetings, Budget Committee meetings, I was at the markup on Thursday—I didn't hear one Republican word about the need for pay equity for women workers, about the need to address the overtime scandal, and about the need to address the minimum wage. These are the issues the American people want addressed, but look high and low in that long Republican budget, you will not find one word addressing these issues.

I can stay in Vermont and I suspect every State in this country, young people and their families are enormously frustrated by the high cost of college education and the horrendously oppressive student debt that many of them leave school with. In fact, student debt today at $1.2 trillion is the second-largest category of debt in this country, more than credit card debt and auto loan debt.

Does the Republican budget do anything to lower interest rates on student debt? No. In fact, their budget would make a bad situation even worse by eliminating subsidized student loans and increasing the cost of a college education by about $3,000 for some of the lowest income students in America.

Does the Republican budget support or comment on President Obama's initiative to make 2 years of community college free or do they provide any other initiative to make college affordable? Sadly, they don't. But what they do is cut $90 billion in Pell grants over a 10-year period, which would make college even more expensive for about 8 million low-income college students.

My Republican colleagues say they are concerned about the deficit—which, by the way, has been reduced by more than two-thirds since President Obama has been in office, and we should be clear this side of the aisle is concerned about the deficit.

My Republican colleagues are concerned about an $18 trillion national debt, which has skyrocketed in recent years. One of the reasons it has skyrocketed is that we went to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the experts tell us that by the time we take care of the last veteran, those wars may cost over $5 trillion, and my deficit hawk friends on the Republican side, how did they pay for those wars? What taxes did they raise? What programs did they cut? They didn't. They put it on the credit card. That is how they paid for it.

What concerns me very much is that, unfortunately, two wars unpaid for is not enough for my Republican colleagues. In the committee markup they put another $38 billion into defense spending on the credit card—off-budget.

So I think we should ask ourselves how does it happen that the move toward their balanced budget approach—they want to cut nutrition, education, health care, virtually every program that working families need—but when it comes to defense spending, another $38 billion. That is not chump change, even in Washington. That is off-budget—no problem, just add it to the deficit.

When we talk about sensible ways of addressing our deficit or sensible ways of addressing our national debt, we cannot ignore the reality that major corporation after major corporation, in a given year, pays what in taxes—20 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent, zero percent. Profitable corporations such as General Electric, Verizon, Boeing, and many others have not only paid nothing in Federal income taxes in some recent years, they actually get rebates from the IRS.

Can we talk about that issue or is the only way toward a balanced budget to cut programs for the elderly, the children, and the sick and the poor?

A report from the Congressional Research Service: Each and every year profitable corporations are avoiding about $100 billion in taxes by stashing their profits in the Cayman islands.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SANDERS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. ENZI. If the Senator needs a few more minutes——

Mr. SANDERS. I would be pleased to split the time.

I thank my colleague. I will take a few more minutes, and if he has more, he could take the rest.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. SANDERS. The point I was making is if we are serious about reducing the deficit, it is inconceivable that one does not look at the fact that corporation after corporation is paying zero in Federal income taxes. It is inconceivable that we do not recognize that in 1952 corporations contributed about 32 percent of all Federal tax revenue. Today, they contribute about 11 percent. It is inconceivable that we do not understand that according to the CRS, each and every year profitable corporations are avoiding $100 billion in taxes.

How can we not look at that issue? How could your only approach be to make it harder for kids to go to college or for little children to be in the Head Start Program?

I look forward to the debate we will be having over the next several days. I suspect there will be a lot of amendments being offered. I think it is fair to say, on this side of the aisle, what the amendments will be saying is that we need to create millions of jobs. We need to raise wages in America. We need a tax system that is fair and does not contain loopholes that allow the wealthy and large corporations to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

We need a budget that says women workers should earn the same as male workers. We need a budget that says we have to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure.

I think there will be a lot of very serious debates. I think the differences between the two sides will become very apparent, and I hope the American people pay strong attention to this discussion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. I thank the ranking member for his comments.

Madam President, I appreciate the civility with which we went through the committee process and look forward to having that same civility on the floor.

Yes, there are some very important things for us to talk about. I have to agree, we need to do some things. The areas that were mentioned were taxes, wages, health insurance, infrastructure, and student debt. We just have a little bit different direction on how to achieve those things, but I am hoping we can find the common ground on those.

The budget itself didn't get into specificity on how to do these things because our Budget Committee—while we have people who represent a lot of those different committees—don't have the range of expertise that the committees themselves do. So what we tried to do in the budget was set the parameters for them to work in and to find the solutions that would work best within those parameters.

We are trying to get this budget done by April 15. That is actually a statutory deadline—it is seldom ever met—and I intend to meet that deadline. That is so the appropriators, the people doing the spending bills, can actually get started, so that for once maybe we can have all 12 spending bills debated on the floor, unlimited amendments, so we can get as many of the 100 opinions that we have—it is 300 or 400 opinions actually—involved in the decisions on how to best to spend the money the United States spends.

The Finance Committee that I am also on is actually dedicated to getting some tax reform done. I think they will do it in a bipartisan way. That should eliminate some of the loopholes that have been talked about and also clear up some of the misconceptions there are about some of the things.

I will conclude by talking a little about deficit, because I keep hearing the other side say they have reduced the deficit in half. Yes, but the word ''deficit'' is so misleading. It is not the debt, it is the deficit. That is the amount of overspending in any given year. So they have reduced the amount of overspending by one-half, but it is still overspent by one-half. Every time it is overspent, that adds to the debt. That is how the $18 trillion gets to $25 trillion in the next 10 years. We have to stop doing that. So I would appreciate it if they would use a different word. Somebody said it is the fiscal gap. Well, maybe ''fiscal gap'' is a better word, but it is overspending.

Now overspending can be changed in two different ways: We can either increase taxes or we can reduce our spending on things or we can do a combination of those things. Until we start talking to each other, we won't be doing any combinations of anything, probably.

So I am hoping we can have the civility we had in the committee here on the floor and come up with solutions for America and Americans and the hard-working taxpayers of this country, who are really interested in all of these topics and feel we ought to do something about it and that we shouldn't just be taking a lot of latitude and putting in details that maybe aren't there in the other's provisions. So I look forward to the debate.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, 5 years ago today, President Obama signed his health care bill into law. Since then Americans have watched their paychecks shrink because of the law. Hard-working American taxpayers have paid billions of dollars in higher taxes because of the law. They have had less health care choice because of the law.

So what does the President say about all of this? What does the President say to the millions of Americans who have had to suffer—suffer—through a long list of costly and appalling side effects of the President's health care law? Well, last week he gave a speech in Cleveland and he said, ''It's working even better than I expected.'' He repeated the same thing this weekend, saying, ''It's working even better than I expected.''

Has the President not seen what has happened to workers' paychecks over the last 5 years? Maybe the President missed an article by the Associated Press last Wednesday. The headline was: ''Health care law paperwork costs small businesses thousands.'' The article said, ''Complying with the health care law is costing small businesses thousands of dollars that they didn't have to spend before the new regulations went into effect.''

The article gives the example of Mike Patton, who has a flooring company in the San Francisco Bay area. All of the extra ObamaCare paperwork is costing him about $25,000 a year. To pay for it, the article said, Mike had to ''cut back on workers' bonuses and raises.'' He told the Associated Press, ''They understand it didn't emanate from us . . . They're just disappointed that $25,000 could have gone into a bonus pool.''

Mike Patton's employees will get less money in their paychecks because of all the complex and costly redtape of ObamaCare. Is that even better than the President expected?

People are getting smaller paychecks and they are also paying higher taxes because of this health care law. According to the latest estimate by the Congressional Budget Office, ObamaCare will increase Washington's spending on health care by $1.7 trillion over the next decade. About half of that is for subsidies in the ObamaCare exchanges and about half is to pay for all of the people who have been dumped onto a broken Medicaid system. The $1.7 trillion has to come from somewhere, and a lot of it is coming from hard-working American taxpayers.

ObamaCare included more than 20 tax increases on things such as medical devices, prescription drugs, and even on the very insurance policies that Washington Democrats said everyone has to buy. Why so many taxes? Why is ObamaCare so expensive? Well, an outrageous amount of the money has been wasted over the last 5 years.

Just the other day there was another example that came out of Massachusetts. There was a Boston Herald article last Wednesday, March 18. The headline was: ''Health Connector officials spent $170G on perks.'' The article talks about Federal taxpayer money—Federal taxpayer money—that was given to Massachusetts to set up the State's ObamaCare exchange. The article says:

> Massachusetts Health Connector officials behind the state's failed health care website—

Now, remember, the health care Web site in Massachusetts completely failed.

> Massachusetts Health Connector officials behind the state's failed health care website have racked up more than $170,000 in taxpayer-funded expenses, including a Boston Harbor summertime boat cruise, luxury hotel stays, ''appreciation'' meals for staffers and contractors—and a $285 Obamacare cake commemorating the launch of the Affordable Care Act. . . .

According to the article, ''the Connector's staff and board members scored numerous perks even as they spent hundreds of millions [of dollars] to fix the state portal during its botched Obamacare rollout.''

What does the State have to say about this—about the kind of waste and misuse of taxpayer money? Well, the article actually quotes a spokesman for the exchange saying ''we were happy to do it.'' Does President Obama think that kind of waste is even better than he expected?

It seems as though the American people see headlines like this every day and every day they see more ways the President's health care law has failed us over the last 5 years.

Let me cite one more example, and this one concerns one of the ways ObamaCare has meant less choice for Americans when it comes to their own health care. President Obama promised you could keep your doctor. Millions of Americans over the past 5 years have lost access to their doctor because insurance plans have had to limit the network of doctors those patients can see. That can generate and create real problems for people trying to use their coverage to actually get medical care.

This is about a woman by the name of Pam Durocher from Roseville, CA. An article by Kaiser Health News on February 18 told her story. The headline was: ''Even Insured Consumers Get Hit With Unexpectedly Large Medical Bills.'' And she is insured. The article continued: ''After Pam Durocher was diagnosed with breast cancer, she searched her insurer's website for a participating surgeon to do the reconstructive surgery.'' The article said she did her homework, so ''she was stunned to get a $10,000 bill from the surgeon. 'I panicked when I got the bill' ''—no surprise that she panicked when she got the bill—''said the 60-year-old retired civil servant. . . . ''

It turns out the surgeon had two offices and only one of those was in the very narrow network of the insurance plan. The office Pam went to wasn't in the network so she got a bill for $10,000. According to this article: ''Consumer advocates say that the sheer scope of such problems undermine promises''—undermine promises—''made by proponents of the Affordable Care Act that the law would protect against medical bankruptcy.'' It says that, ''Advocates believe a growing number of consumers are vulnerable.''

Let me repeat that: Advocates of the health care law, people who voted for it, believe a growing number—now with the fifth anniversary of the health care law—are vulnerable. And President Obama said that was exactly the type of situation his law was supposed to prevent. Instead, it is exactly the kind of situation his devastating health care law has created.

The Obama administration is bragging—bragging—about the number of people covered by ObamaCare. Is this what those people have to look forward to? Does President Obama really think that making people such as Pam panic means his law is working even better than he expected? It may be better than he expected, but it is a lot worse than what the American people expected. It is also a lot worse than what they were promised.

As a doctor who has practiced medicine for 25 years, I know Americans have always wanted affordable care instead of expensive Washington-mandated coverage. The American people expected health care reform to give them the care they need, from a doctor they choose, at lower cost. Five years ago too many Americans were paying higher premiums. Here we are 5 years later and Americans are paying even higher premiums and finding it harder to see their doctor. This isn't what President Obama promised and it is not what the American people deserve.

In the coming months the Supreme Court will rule on whether the President violated his own law with an unauthorized spending and taxing scheme. This will be a major blow to a law that has failed Americans for more than 5 years and will be an opportunity to finally focus on affordable health care. Republicans are committed to helping the millions of Americans who have been hurt by this law. We are working on a plan that will deliver freedom, flexibility, and choice to Americans.

Five years later, the law has been bad for patients, it has been bad for providers, and it has been terrible for the American taxpayers. This anniversary today is not a cause for celebration. It is a call for action.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the following articles from the Boston Herald, the Associated Press, and Kaiser Health News.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Boston Herald, March 18, 2015]

HEALTH CONNECTOR OFFICIALS SPENT $170G ON PERKS

(By Chris Cassidy, Erin Smith and Matt Stout)

Massachusetts Health Connector officials behind the state's failed health care website have racked up more than $170,000 in taxpayer-funded expenses, including a Boston Harbor summertime boat cruise, luxury hotel stays, ''appreciation'' meals for staffers and contractors—and a $285 Obamacare cake commemorating the launch of the Affordable Care Act, a Herald review has found.

Under the Patrick administration, the Connector's staff and board members scored numerous perks even as they spent hundreds of millions to fix the state portal during its botched Obamacare rollout. Among them:

$553 for a harbor cruise for an employee celebration in September 2013, part of a $1,495 total expense item that also covered costs for Sam LaGrassa's sandwiches and Lizzy's Ice Cream.

A $236 one-night stay at the Palms Hotel in Miami, which bills itself as a beachside oasis with ''spa-inspired'' bathrooms, an on-site spa and ''impressive views of the ocean,'' plus $944 in stays at Nine Zero and Millennium Bostonian, and $352 at the Omni Parker House.

A $285 Obamacare cake in October 2013, and thousands for employee ''appreciation'' desserts and catered meals for staffers and contractors, including a $236 ''cookie tray'' from Metro Catering, $298 for Lizzy's Homemade Ice Cream, $134 for pastries from Fratelli's Pastry Shop and an unspecified amount from Dandy Donuts for call-center employees in Illinois.

About $20,400 in parking costs that officials say the state's taxpayer-funded Medicaid program will ultimately cover.

All told, Connector officials ran up $171,030 in expenses in the 19 months from July 2013 through January 2015, the review found.

Connector spokesman Jason Lefferts defended the expenses, noting they also include trips to Maryland and Washington, D.C., to meet with Obama administration officials at an important time in the relaunch of the website.

''We found the right path and we got a website that worked,'' said Lefferts. ''In terms of the food and the appreciation, obviously not just for staff here, but for the vendors that worked for us and the navigators that were helpful to us. If we bought them a bagel or a sandwich in appreciation, we were happy to do it.''

From the start, the Connector's Obamacare portal was plagued by embarrassing glitches that, among other things, blocked people with hyphenated last names from signing up for plans, and forced others to falsely claim to be prison inmates or mental patients before they could finish their applications. Others complained about frequent computer crashes and long waits on the phone.

Travel costs for board members to attend meetings also ran high, the review found. Former board member Ian Duncan—a University of California at Santa Barbara professor—was reimbursed $16,584 for travel.

Board member Lou Malzone, who lives on Cape Cod, expensed $11,196 for travel and hotels. Malzone chalked up the costs to times he stays overnight ahead of a board meeting, instead of making the 75-mile, one-way trip to and from the Cape.

''You tell me if you can find (a hotel) for under $200 or $300 a night in Boston,'' Malzone said.

Other larger expense reports, he said—including at least four that topped $1,000—are from times he was out of town on business or vacation and flew back for a board meeting.

''I have a pretty good attendance record,'' he said, estimating he's missed just four meetings over nine years. ''If you're out of town and there's a business meeting, I go back, rather than do conference calls.''

[From the Associated Press, March 18, 2015]

HEALTH CARE LAW PAPERWORK COSTS SMALL BUSINESSES THOUSANDS

(By Joyce M. Rosenberg)

NEW YORK.—Complying with the health care law is costing small businesses thousands of dollars that they didn't have to spend before the new regulations went into effect.

Brad Mete estimates his staffing company, Affinity Resources, will spend $100,000 this year on record-keeping and filing documents with the government. He's hired two extra staffers and is spending more on services from its human resources provider.

The Affordable Care Act, which as of next Jan. 1 applies to all companies with 50 or more workers, requires owners to track staffers' hours, absences and how much they spend on health insurance. Many small businesses don't have the human resources departments or computer systems that large companies have, making it harder to handle the paperwork. On average, complying with the law costs small businesses more than $15,000 a year, according to a survey released a year ago by the National Small Business Association.

''It's a horrible hassle,'' says Mete, managing partner of the Miami-based company.

But there are some winners. Some companies are hiring people to take on the extra work and human resources providers and some software developers are experiencing a bump in business.

Companies must track workers' hours according to rules created by the IRS to determine whether a business is required to offer health insurance to workers averaging 30 hours a week, and their dependents. Companies may be penalized if they're subject to the law and don't offer insurance.

Businesses must also track the months an employee is covered by insurance, and the cost of premiums so the government can decide if the coverage is affordable under the law.

Many companies have separate software for payroll, attendance and benefits management and no easy way to combine data from all of them, says John Haslinger, a vice president at ADP Benefits Outsourcing Consulting. And early next year, employers must complete IRS forms using information from these different sources. The process is more complex for businesses with operations in different states.

Mike Patton's health insurance broker is handling the extra administrative chores for his San Francisco Bay-area flooring company DSB Plus, but he's paying for it through higher premiums—about $25,000 a year.

To pay for the extra services the business is getting from his broker, Patton cut back on workers' bonuses and raises.

''They understand it didn't emanate from us,'' Patton says. ''They're just disappointed that $25,000 could have gone into a bonus pool.''

That kind of spending has led to a surge in business for payroll providers, human resources consultants and health insurance brokers that track hours and keep records for small businesses, and even file documents with the government.

Sales have more than doubled in the last year at human resources provider Engage PEO. Many of its clients are small companies.

''They want to comply with the law and don't want to be subject to an unintended penalty,'' says Dorothy Miraglia King, executive vice president of the St. Petersburg, Florida-based company.

Businessolver, a company whose primary business is creating software to help companies administer benefits, also reports an uptick in demand. In 2013, when clients started becoming aware of the law's paperwork requirements, they asked for software that could take care of all their needs, says Rae Shanahan, a human resources executive at the West Des Moines, Iowa, company.

''The traditional systems that people have can't handle it,'' she says.

[From Kaiser Health News, Feb. 18, 2015]

EVEN INSURED CONSUMERS GET HIT WITH UNEXPECTEDLY LARGE MEDICAL BILLS

(By Julie Appleby)

After Pam Durocher was diagnosed with breast cancer, she searched her insurer's website for a participating surgeon to do the reconstructive surgery.

Having done her homework, she was stunned to get a $10,000 bill from the surgeon.

''I panicked when I got that bill,'' said the 60–year-old retired civil servant who lives near Roseville, Calif.

Like Durocher, many consumers who take pains to research which doctors and hospitals participate in their plans can still end up with huge bills.

Sometimes, that's because they got incorrect or incomplete information from their insurer or health-care provider. Sometimes, it's because a physician has multiple offices, and not all are in network, as in Durocher's case. Sometimes, it's because a participating hospital relies on out-of-network doctors, including emergency room physicians, anesthesiologists and radiologists.

Consumer advocates say the sheer scope of such problems undermine promises made by proponents of the Affordable Care Act that the law would protect against medical bankruptcy.

''It's not fair and probably not legal that consumers be left holding the bag when an out-of-network doctor treats them,'' said Timothy Jost, a law professor at Washington and Lee University. Jost said it's a different matter if a consumer knowingly chooses an out-of-network doctor.

Durocher learned only after getting her surgeon's bill that just one of his two offices participated in her plan and she had chosen the wrong one. She said the doctor's staff later insisted that they had raised the issue during her initial consultation, but she doesn't recall that, possibly because she was distracted by her cancer diagnosis.

Adding insult to injury, insurers are not required to count out-of-network charges toward the federal health law's annual limit on how much of their medical costs patients can be asked to pay out of their own pockets.

Efforts by doctors, hospitals and other health providers to charge patients for bills not covered by their insurers are called ''balance billing.'' The problem pre-dates the federal health law and has long been among the top complaints filed with state insurance regulators.

Because the issue is complex and pits powerful rivals against one another—among them, hospitals, doctors and insurers—relatively few states have addressed it. What laws do exist are generally limited to specific situations, such as emergency room care, or certain types of insurance plans, such as HMOs.

The federal health law largely sidesteps the issue as well. It says insurers must include coverage for emergency care and not charge policyholders higher copayments for ER services at non-network hospitals, because patients can't always choose where they go. While the insurer will pay a portion of the bill, in such cases, doctors or hospitals may still bill patients for the difference between that payment and their own charges.

That means that in spite of having insurance, a consumer involved in a car wreck and taken to a non-network hospital might receive additional bills, not just from the hospital, but from the radiologist who read his X-rays, the surgeon who repaired his broken leg and the laboratory that processed his blood tests.

NETWORKS GET NARROWER

Advocates believe a growing number of consumers are vulnerable to balance billing as insurance networks grow smaller in the bid to hold down costs.

For example, there were no in-network emergency room physicians or anesthesiologists in some of the hospitals participating in plans offered by three large insurers in Texas in 2013 and 2014, according to a survey of state data by the Center for Public Policy Priorities, a Texas advocacy group.

Smaller networks are also becoming more common in employer-based insurance: About 23 percent of job-based plans had so-called ''narrow networks'' in 2012, up from 15 percent in 2007, according to a May report from the Urban Institute and Georgetown University Center on Health Insurance Reforms.

To protect consumers, advocacy groups, including Consumers Union and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, want regulators to strictly limit balance billing when an insured person gets care in a medical facility that is part of an insurer's network.

''Without protection from balance billing, the cost of out-of-network care can be overwhelming,'' wrote Consumers Union in a recent letter to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), which is updating a model law that states could adopt to regulate insurance networks.

NAIC'S current draft does not directly address the issue of balance billing and consumer efforts have drawn sharp opposition from insurers, hospitals and doctors.

Some states have taken other steps to protect consumers:

Earlier this month, California set out new rules requiring some insurers to provide accurate lists of medical providers in their networks.

New Jersey specifies that insurers guarantee that certain providers be available ''within 20 miles or 30 minutes average driving time.''

Colorado insurers must pay non-network medical providers their full charges, not discounted network rates, for care at in-network hospitals.

In Maryland, insurers must pay for ''covered services,'' which includes emergency care, but the state sets standardized payment rates.

Starting in April, New Yorkers won't face extra bills for out-of-network emergency care, when an in-network provider is unavailable or when they aren't told ahead of time that they may be treated by a non-participating provider. Instead, the bills must be settled in arbitration between the providers and the insurance companies.

COST TRADE-OFFS

Insurers defend the move to smaller networks of doctors and hospitals as a way to provide the low-cost plans that consumers say they want. Since insurers can no longer reject enrollees with health problems or charge them more, the plans are using the tools left to them to reduce costs.

If regulators required them to fully cover charges by out-of-network doctors, that could reduce ''incentives for providers to participate in networks'' and make it harder to have adequate networks, America's Health Insurance Plans, the insurers' trade group, and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association wrote in a joint letter to the NAIC.

It would also raise premiums.

Instead, AHIP says, states could require out-of-network doctors to accept a benchmark payment from insurers, perhaps what Medicare pays, rather than balance billing patients.

Physicians, meanwhile, blame insurers for inadequate networks.

''It is the limited coverage, not the physician bill, which is the cause of the unfairness,'' the Texas Medical Association wrote to the NAIC.

At the very least, doctors and hospitals say insurers need to do a better job of educating policyholders that their plans may not cover care provided by some doctors and hospitals.

''There's no 'free' anywhere,'' said Lee Spangler, vice president of medical economics with the Texas Medical Association. ''You either pay for the coverage through premiums, or you pay for service when you receive it.''

Doctors choose whether to balance bill, he added—and some don't.

But he noted that patients ''have received professional services in the expectation that they will get alleviation of what ailed them, and the physicians provided it in the expectation they would be paid. There's no in between,'' Spangler said.

For patients like Durocher, who got billed even after doing everything she was told, the only recourse is to negotiate with the physician or hospital to ask them to lower or drop the charges.

''Fortunately for me,'' Durocher said, ''this doctor was very nice and wrote off almost $7,000 of the bill.''

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, today marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the so-called Affordable Care Act. Of course, few people are actually celebrating.

Five years—that is a long time, more than long enough for us to evaluate the impact of the law to determine if it is working. On that question, I think the answer is clear: The President's health care law is not working—not even close.

Most Americans recognize this. They have seen how the law has failed to deliver on the many promises that were made at the time it was passed, and they want a change. I will have more to say on the change in just a few minutes. For now, I would like to take some time to talk about the lessons we have learned over the last 5 years.

If we think back to 2009 and early 2010, when ObamaCare was being debated in Congress, we will remember a number of promises that the law would actually reduce the cost of health care in this country. Those were big promises. After all, costs represent the biggest barrier to health care in the

United States and are, by almost all accounts, the top concern for health care consumers. We simply cannot adequately reform health care without reducing costs, and on that count alone ObamaCare is a miserable failure.

For example, under the law, we have seen premium hikes. Studies have shown the health care law increased costs in the individual insurance market by as much as 50 percent in 2014 alone. This year, we have already seen a 4-percent increase for benchmark plans in the health insurance exchanges. Moreover, a recent report by Avalere Health found premiums in the most popular exchange plans increased by an average of 10 percent in 2015.

In addition to these spikes, which some might try to write off as isolated, premiums have increased faster overall under ObamaCare. According to a recent report by the National Bureau of Economic Research, 2014 premiums in the nongroup health insurance market grew by 24.4 percent, on average, compared to what they would have been had the law never been passed.

Looking to the future, costs are projected to continue going up. According to the Congressional Budget Office, premiums will increase by about 6 percent per year over the next 10 years. This increase can be attributed to a number of factors, including high demand for expensive medical care, higher provider rates as enrollment increases, uncertainty created by haphazard regulatory changes under ObamaCare, and the failure of the plans to attract enough young and healthy consumers.

Of course, none of these increased costs are surprising. Despite the promises made by the President and his allies in Congress that ObamaCare would actually reduce costs, numerous studies and projections indicated that costs would be on the rise after the law was implemented. Indeed, those of us who opposed the law have been noting this almost nonstop for the last 5 years.

As we can see, the President's health care law is a failure on its own terms. The law is named the ''Affordable Care Act.'' The promise to reduce the cost of health care is right there in the name, and, by any measure, the law has failed to live up to this promise.

Of course, the failure to bring down costs isn't the only problem we have seen with regard to ObamaCare. Another major problem is the lack of security and failed oversight of the online marketplace, which has put consumers' personal information at risk of fraud or theft.

It started with a lack of preparation. Two government watchdogs—the GAO and HHS Office of Inspector General—found that healthcare.gov was given a green light to launch, even though it was not adequately secure. It continued with weak security.

Shortly after the launch of the exchanges, GAO found security problems in State computer systems that link to the Federal network and warned ''increased and unnecessary risks remain of unauthorized access, disclosure, or modification of information collected and maintained by HealthCare.gov.''

CMS did take action to lower those risks, but even with those changes in place, the HHS OIG—Office of Inspector General—remained concerned about security issues, including the use of encryption technology that did not meet government standards.

I was one of the first Members of Congress to note these security problems, and I introduced legislation to address some of them. Sadly, with the Democrats in charge of the Senate, the legislation did not go anywhere, and the results were predictable.

In late 2013 and early 2014, cyber security experts warned the healthcare.gov Web site was vulnerable to hacking, and, sure enough, in July of last year, the site was hacked, resulting in the upload of malicious code.

These security problems are a prime example of how careless and haphazard the Obama administration has been as it has tried to implement the Affordable Care Act. Sadly, there are even more examples, many of which directly impact the lives and livelihoods of the American people.

As this tax session has commenced, we have seen how the health care law—and the administration's poor management of it—has resulted in frustration and delay for hard-working taxpayers. Let's talk about that frustration.

According to H&R Block, in the first 6 weeks of this tax-filing season, 52 percent of customers who enrolled in insurance through the State or Federal exchanges had to repay a portion of the advanced premium tax credit they received under ObamaCare. That same report found that individuals, on average, are having to repay about $530, which is decreasing their tax refunds by an average of roughly 17 percent.

Now let's talk about delay.

On February 20, 2015, the Obama administration announced that due to an error in the health care law, they sent out about 800,000 incorrect tax statements relating to form 1095–A, meaning that hundreds of thousands of Americans may be seeing delays in their tax refunds this year.

These are just some of the problems hard-working taxpayers are facing as they try to deal with ObamaCare during this tax season.

While the ramifications to taxpayers are significant, the overall impact on America's budget is even greater. The total overall cost of ObamaCare so far has numbered in the tens of billions of dollars, and we are barely through the first phases of implementation.

In numerous areas, taxpayers have been left on the hook for funds that were doled out for ObamaCare to States, corporations, and contractors with little or no accountability. Unfortunately, a significant portion of that money resulted in no benefit whatsoever to the taxpayers.

Last week, the Finance Committee held a hearing on the anniversary of ObamaCare, where I noted five specific misuses of taxpayer funds that have resulted from ObamaCare. In just these five areas, roughly $5.7 billion went to projects that added absolutely no value. Those examples of wasteful spending bear repeating.

No. 1, failed State exchanges. According to CRS—the bipartisan Congressional Research Service—$1.3 billion in taxpayer funds have been spent on State exchanges that failed and were never operational.

No. 2, consumer-oriented and operated plans or co-ops. CMS has loaned $2.4 billion to 24 co-ops, one of which failed before it enrolled anyone. When all is said and done, nearly half of this money will be lost due to defaults or artificially low interest rates, and CMS has no plans to recoup any of these funds, meaning a total cost to taxpayers of around $1 billion.

No. 3, healthcare.gov Web site. The failures of the Federal insurance marketplace are well documented. Despite fixes that eventually came to the Web site, the total cost of the failed enrollment system surpassed $2 billion.

No. 4, Serco. This contractor was awarded $1.2 billion to manage paper applications during the first enrollment period of the health care law. Of course, very few of the applications received were on paper, and Serco employees had little to do. One former employee felt ashamed after leaving the company and reached out to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, saying:

> I feel guilty for working there as long as I did. It was like I was stealing money from people.

No. 5, marketplace navigators. The administration has spent over $120 million on the Navigator Program for the 2014 and 2015 open enrollment periods. With enrollment in the exchanges surpassing 11 million individuals, the efficacy of the Navigator Program has yet to be determined. The overall value of the Navigator Program is, at best, inconclusive, and, at worst, it represents more wasted taxpayer dollars.

These are just five examples of the misguided, poorly defined, and improperly managed aspects of the health care law. There are, of course, many others.

Finally, there are the unilateral changes the administration has made to delay, extend or modify elements of the Affordable Care Act without action or even input from Congress. I have been on the floor a number of times to talk about the overreach on the part of the administration when it comes to implementing ObamaCare, so I will not go into excruciating detail today.

We all know those abuses have taken place. It is no secret. Without statutory authority, the administration twice delayed the employer mandate. They created a transition period out of thin air so the President could pretend that his promise that ''if you like your health care plan, you can keep it'' was not a lie. There have been numerous other exemptions and special enrollment periods created to help the administration avoid negative fallout from patients and the business community—and it wasn't true that ''if you like your health care plan, you can keep it.''

All told, the Obama administration has made literally dozens of unilateral changes to the health care law, apparently recognizing that, as drafted, the law is as problematic as its critics have said.

I could go on, but I think I have sufficiently made some of the points that need to be made. The so-called Affordable Care Act is, by any objective measure, a dismal failure. While its proponents continue to cherry-pick favorable data points in order to fool the American people into thinking the law works, the majority of us know the truth: It is time for a change.

It is no secret that I support a complete repeal of the President's health care law, but a simple repeal isn't good enough. We need to replace ObamaCare with health care reforms that will actually work.

That is why I have joined my colleagues Senator BURR and Chairman UPTON of the House Energy and Commerce Committee in unveiling the Patient CARE Act, a legislative proposal that will actually reduce the costs of health care in this country, while giving people more rights to choose what kind of health care for which they want to pay money.

Our proposal is a serious, workable solution to the problems caused by the Affordable Care Act. It is out there for everyone to see. I, once again, encourage all of my colleagues to look it over and provide us with your thoughts and input on our ideas. We would be interested in hearing from you. If those ideas can be improved, we are certainly interested in improving them.

Once again, the 5-year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act is hardly cause for celebration, but it should be a time for all of us—particularly those who supported the law at the outset—to reflect on the last 5 years and decide how we want to move forward when it comes to the Nation's health care system. I hope our colleagues will think about that. This bill was passed through both bodies on a totally partisan vote, with 100 percent of the Democrats voting in each body.

I think I have made a pretty compelling case for why the current law isn't working and why we need to go in a different direction. I hope eventually my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will reach this same conclusion so we can work together to come up with a health care system and health care set of laws that will work, do good for the American people, and give us some element of respectability in the Congress that I think the Congress needs at this particular time.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator is recognized.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRAN

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, this week we will debate the budget. The key part is the military budget, one part of our government where the strategy and threats must drive the budget, not vice versa. The greatest threat to our national security is a nuclear-armed Iran, and this man, Ayatollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran.

Last week marked Nowruz, the beginning of the Persian New Year. On the occasion we were treated to speeches by President Obama and Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. I have to say, President Obama's speech was ill-advised. He spoke to the Iranian people directly, asking them to press their leaders and speak up in support of a nuclear agreement.

Let's be clear about one thing: Iranians who speak up tend to disappear into secret prisons or wind up hanging from cranes by the neck. Worse, by acting as if public opinion matters to the Ayatollahs, President Obama is treating Iran as if it were a legitimate democracy, not a brutal theocratic dictatorship. No President should legitimize such a regime, which emboldens the dictator and undermines the Iranian people struggling under his yoke.

But today I want to focus on the speech of this man, Ayatollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran. The Ayatollah gave his speech on Saturday, just 2 days ago. It may have escaped your attention, but it was not exactly a New Year's message filled with blessings of hope and peace.

Ayatollah Khomeini has never been a great admirer of America, of course. He sometimes likes to refer to us as the ''Great Satan.'' During his Nowruz speech, he whipped the crowd into frenzied chants of ''death to America.'' What was his response to that chant? He said, ''Yes, certainly, death to America.'' Death to America. That was just 2 days ago.

Remember, this is the leader with whom the United States is negotiating today, a theocratic tyrant who, in the middle of nuclear negotiations, chants ''death to America.'' I suggest that we rethink the wisdom of granting nuclear concessions to such a man.

Unfortunately, Ayatollah Khomeini may know his negotiating partners somewhat better than they know themselves, for the Ayatollah also observed, ''Iran's enemies, particularly America, are moving forward with prudence and diplomacy. I understand them. They know what they are doing. They need these negotiations. America needs the nuclear negotiations.''

Regrettably, he is right when he says he understands his enemies, since the West, especially the President, acts as if we need these negotiations more than Iran does. After all, we had Iran on its knees in 2013 when President Obama gave Iran billions of dollars in sanctions relief for merely starting negotiations. The West has extended negotiations twice in exchange for nothing. The President has also made a series of one-sided concessions from Iran's uranium enrichment capabilities to the length of a nuclear agreement. So, yes, unfortunately, Ayatollah Khomeini is correct when he says he understands his enemies.

Let's consider what he said about the negotiations in this light. This past weekend, the Ayatollah emphasized, ''We are absolutely not negotiating or holding discussions with the Americans over regional or domestic issues and neither over weapons capabilities.'' Again, he is absolutely right. Iran has a ballistic missile program, which it only needs if it wants to strike the United States or our European allies, because it already has missiles capable of striking Israel or anywhere else in the Middle East. Yet we have removed its missile program from the negotiating table, just as we have removed the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program from the table, even though that is critical to understanding how far they have progressed toward a bomb.

It is not just their weapons capabilities. Note that the Ayatollah also said Iran is not negotiating over regional issues. He made this point repeatedly, saying also, ''We are not negotiating with the Americans over regional issues. U.S. goals in the region are in complete contrast with our goals,'' and, ''Negotiations with the U.S. are only over the nuclear issue, and nothing else. Everyone should be aware of this.''

By ''regional issues'' and ''our goals,'' to be clear, Ayatollah Khomeini means Iran's drive for regional hegemony. The outlaw Assad regime in Syria is more beholden to Iran than ever. Iranian-aligned militants have seized the capital of Yemen, causing the American Embassy to close and our troops to evacuate. Iranian-backed and Iranian-led Shiite militias are slowly taking over Iraq, and Lebanon remains subject to Hezbollah, Iran's terrorist proxy.

Despite this multifront aggression, President Obama is compartmentalizing the nuclear negotiations as if Iran's drive for hegemony and its pursuit of nuclear weapons are distinguishable and unrelated rather than springing from the regime's revolutionary nature. In fact, President Obama reportedly wrote a private letter to Ayatollah Khomeini—his fourth private letter to the Ayatollah—in part reassuring him that the United States would not undermine Assad's regime in Syria. Is it any wonder then that the Ayatollah boasts the negotiations are so limited? Is it any wonder what Ayatollah Khomeini said this weekend about sanctions relief? President Obama and Secretary Kerry keep insisting that sanctions can only be lifted gradually as Iran demonstrates compliance with any deal. The Ayatollah is having none of that. He said this past weekend: ''The lifting of the sanctions is part of the issues being negotiated and not the outcome of the negotiations.'' In other words, in exchange for the Ayatollah's ephemeral and easily reversed promises, ''sanctions must be lifted immediately following an agreement.'' That is not a splittable difference. And let's just say our side's history of one-sided concessions in these negotiations does not inspire confidence that we will preserve a sanctions regime that we took decades to assemble fully.

Finally, Ayatollah Khomeini wants the world to know that Iran will not be bound in perpetuity by any deal, no matter its terms. He said: ''The Americans keep saying that there should be irreversibility in the terms Iran accepts and the decisions it makes. We do not accept that.'' The Ayatollah is happy to pocket concessions now for billions of dollars in sanctions relief and international legitimacy while preserving the option of going nuclear in the future, much as North Korea did after the 1994 Agreed Framework. I understand why Ayatollah Khomeini would want that deal, but why would we?

This is the man with whom we are negotiating. Evil men rarely cloak their wicked intent, and I urge my fellow Senators and all Americans to pay careful attention to Ayatollah Khomeini's words both this past weekend and more generally. When someone chants, ''Yes, certainly, death to America,'' we should take him at his word and we should not put him on a path to a nuclear bomb. Those words are appalling enough. Let's not give him the ability to act on them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I was in the House of Representatives for 16 years, and I have been in the Senate now for 8 years. During all of that time, this country faced and still faces a major health care crisis.

As the Presiding Officer knows, the United States is the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all of our people. Today, despite the modest gains of the Affordable Care Act, which I will discuss in a moment, we still have about 40 million Americans without any health insurance. By the way, despite so many uninsured and so many underinsured, we end up paying, by far, per capita the highest costs of any country.

How does it happen? Millions of people are uninsured, millions more are underinsured, and we end up paying per capita almost double what any other Nation faces.

Now, I was in the Congress during the years of the Bush administration, and I waited eagerly to hear what my Republican colleagues had to say about tens of millions of people without any health insurance and about the cost of health care being so expensive. I waited and I waited, and my Republican colleagues had nothing to say. Apparently, the private insurance companies were doing just great under that system. Drug companies were charging our people the highest prices in the world under that system. What is there to complain about? What is there to worry about? So 40 million, 50 million people have no health insurance and people can't afford health care, but it is no problem for my Republican colleagues.

Five years ago, the Congress, with no Republican support, passed the Affordable Care Act. Let me be very clear. I voted for the Affordable Care Act. I will be the first to say that the Affordable Care Act has many problems and, in fact, in many ways, it did not go anywhere near as far as it should have gone. By far, it is not a perfect piece of legislation. Yet I still wait to hear what my Republican colleagues have to say about how we address the health care crisis, other than doing what they are doing in this budget, which is to repeal the Affordable Care Act completely.

Let's take a look at what the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare—has accomplished, which they want to end completely. After 5 years of the Affordable Care Act, more than 16 million Americans have gained health coverage. Many of those people never had health insurance in their entire lives. Many of those people were getting their health care through the emergency room at outrageously high costs. Since 2013, we have seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate in decades, and the Nation's uninsured rate is now at the lowest level ever recorded.

Just since October 2013, the uninsured rate for nonelderly adults has fallen by 35 percent, and 16 million more Americans have health insurance.

Republican response: Get rid of the ACA; throw 16 million Americans off of health insurance.

Since the Affordable Care Act was enacted, health care prices have risen at the slowest rate in nearly 50 years. All of us can remember 7, 8, 10 years ago health care insurance rates with increases of 20, 30 percent. Since the Affordable Care Act was enacted, health prices have risen at the slowest rate in nearly 50 years. Are they going up? Yes, they are, but at the slowest rate in nearly 50 years.

Thanks to exceptionally slow growth in per-person costs throughout our health care system, national health care expenditures grew at the slowest rate on record—on record—from 2010 through 2013. Are we making progress in controlling the growth in health care costs? Yes, we are.

Republican response: Throw it out.

Ten million low-income Americans are now able to get health insurance through Medicaid. And if one is a low-income American struggling to make ends meet and not able to afford health care, in many instances, this is health insurance that saves one's life. It saves one's life because they now have the opportunity—maybe for the first time in years—to be able to go into a doctor's office because they have Medicaid.

Republican response: Throw it out; 10 million low-income Americans no longer have health insurance.

All of us remember not so many years ago, before the ACA. You have health insurance for your family, and when your child reaches the age of 21, that child is now off of your health insurance plan. So we have huge uninsured numbers for young people in this country who are no longer able to be on their parents' health insurance plan.

Under the Affordable Care Act, some 5.7 million young adults have been able to stay on their parents' policies. The uninsured rate for young adults has dropped by 40 percent. I would like to see it drop even more than that, but 40 percent is nothing to sneeze at.

The Republican response: Let's make sure all of these young people from 21 to 26 rejoin the ranks of the uninsured.

One of the great scandals that existed in this country before we had the Affordable Care Act—when we think back on it, people find it hard to believe—somebody was diagnosed with diabetes, with cancer, with heart disease, with AIDS, or whatever it may be, and that person walked into an insurance company and said: I need some insurance. They filled out forms. The insurance company said: Oh, you had breast cancer 3 years ago; we are not going to insure you. You had diabetes; you are not going to get insurance. So the people who needed insurance the most were the people least likely to be able to get insurance. Can we imagine that—for people who had a history of heart disease, a history of cancer, scared to death it may reoccur, in absolute need of insurance, insurance companies said: No. We can discriminate against you. You are sick, you may get sick again, and we will have to pay out money. We don't want your business. Well, the ACA did something about that. It should have never been allowed to happen in the first place. It provides protections for people with preexisting conditions.

Republicans want to end the ACA. That is in this budget. They want to get rid of it. So for those people who have serious illnesses, understand that if the Republicans succeed, people may not be able to get health insurance, because we will go back to a time when companies could discriminate against people with serious illnesses.

Before the ACA, many individuals couldn't gain access to health insurance for a variety of ''illnesses,'' including pregnancy. I guess pregnancy is an illness for which a person doesn't deserve insurance. It doesn't make a lot of sense to most Americans, but that is what will reoccur if the Republicans are successful.

Millions of seniors in this country are struggling in terms of how to pay for their medicines. The cost of medicine in America is very high—the highest of any country on Earth. The Affordable Care Act moves to close the doughnut hole, which means money that has to come out of seniors' own pockets. If the Republican budget gets passed and if that gets implemented into law, seniors will now be paying significantly more for their prescription drugs. The Affordable Care Act includes important health care for seniors in the doughnut hole, including 45-percent discounts on the cost of their drugs, but allowing the full price of the drug to be counted toward the amount they need to spend to get out of the hole.

The Affordable Care Act gives people access to free preventive care that keeps them healthy and out of the hospital.

The Affordable Care Act ends discrimination against women by health insurance companies so that they don't have to pay more for health insurance simply because they are a woman. Are we going to go back to the days when because a patient was a woman, she had to pay more for health insurance than a man? I certainly hope not. But that is what happens if we end the Affordable Care Act.

The Affordable Care Act protects against a practice by insurance companies of including lifetime limits in their policies. Prior to the ACA, many insurance plans included lifetime limits—a limit on the amount of coverage that plan would provide an individual or a family in their lifetime. So, in other words, if somebody was racking up large claims because they were seriously ill, the insurance company said: Sorry, that is it. We are not going to pay any more. Are those the days we want to go back to?

I think we can all agree the Affordable Care Act is far from perfect. In my own view, we should provide health care to every person in this country as a right, and I would do it through a Medicare-for-all program. Other people have different ideas. But it is hard for me to imagine anyone thinking that the solution to America's health care problems today is simply to eliminate the Affordable Care Act.

Let me change topics and take a broader look at the Republican budget going beyond the Affordable Care Act, which they want to abolish.

The question we have to ask ourselves is whether we are such a poor country that we should move toward a Republican budget which forces more and more people to have no health insurance; which makes it harder for working families to send their kids to college; which makes it harder for low-income families to send their kids to Head Start; which cuts back on nutrition programs, whether it is the Food Stamp Program, the Meals on Wheels program, the WIC Program; which helps people who are struggling, literally, to try to come up with the income to adequately feed themselves. We have many people in this country who are actually hungry, and the Republican budget cuts those programs. Are we such a poor country that those are the choices that stand before us? I think not. I think the facts are quite the opposite. I think the facts tell us that the United States of America is, in fact, the wealthiest country on this planet. In fact, we have never been a more wealthy country. We are not a poor country. We are an extremely wealthy country.

The problem we face is that we have a grotesque level of income and wealth inequality such that tens of millions of families are struggling economically and many are hungry, while at the other side, people on top are doing phenomenally well. But when you add it all together, it turns out that we are a very wealthy country. And the idea that people would come forward and say: We are going to make it harder for low-income families to feed their kids, we are going to make it harder for working-class families to send their kids to college, and we are going to make it harder for working families to get their kids into childcare is a totally absurd argument. We are not a poor country.

Let me demonstrate how we are not a poor country. When some of us talk about the rich getting richer, that is a general statement. Let me be more specific. From the year 2013 to the year 2015, the wealthiest 14 Americans—14 people—increased their net wealth by more than $157 billion over the last 2 years. The wealthiest 14 billionaires in America saw their net wealth increase by more than $157 billion from 2013 to 2015.

Let me be even more specific, and tell me whether this is a poor nation that cuts kids off of health insurance, a poor nation that denies nutrition to families who need it, a poor nation that cuts back on Meals on Wheels for elderly, low-income seniors. Here is what is going on in this ''poor nation.'' From March of 2013 to March of 2015, Bill Gates, the wealthiest person in America, saw his wealth increase by $12.2 billion, going from $67 billion to $79 billion in 2015. During that period, Warren Buffett saw his wealth increase by $19 billion—one guy in 2 years. Larry Ellison saw his wealth increase by $11 billion. The Koch brothers saw their wealth increase by almost $18 billion in a 2-year period. The Waltons saw huge increases in their wealth—they are the wealthiest family in America—Christy Walton by $13.5 billion, Jim Walton by $13.9 billion, and S. Robson Walton by $13 billion. Michael Bloomberg saw his wealth increase by $8.5 billion. Jeff Bezos's wealth went up by $9.6 billion. Mark Zuckerberg's wealth went up by $20 billion, Sheldon Adelson's by $9.5 billion, Larry Page's by $7.6 billion, and Sergey Brin's by $6.4 billion. These are just the top 14. Added together, their wealth increased by $157 billion.

This is a reality my Republican friends don't want to deal with. They do not want to ask the wealthiest people in this country—many of whom are paying an effective tax rate lower than that paid by truckdrivers and nurses—to start paying their fair share of taxes. Their solution to the deficit problem is to cut programs for working families, the elderly, the children, the sick, and the poor.

Despite the fact that the billionaires of this country are doing phenomenally well, their view is, oh no, we can't go to those guys. They may be potential campaign contributors. We are going to go after the elderly—they don't contribute a whole lot. Elderly people on the Meals on Wheels program, elderly people making $14,000 a year—they have no political power here in Washington. They have no lobbyists out there. We will just go after the working families, the poor, the elderly, the children, the sick. They are easy. They are not actively involved. Many of them don't even vote. We can go after them, but we have to protect the interests of the wealthy and the powerful.

At a time when the richest 400 Americans paid a tax rate of just 16.7 percent in 2012—the second lowest on record—the Republican budget does nothing to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share of taxes to create jobs or reduce the deficit. They are immune. The rich get richer, but leave them alone. No problem. Working families pay a higher effective tax rate than billionaires—not a problem because we are going to cut the deficit by going after the most vulnerable people in this country, the people who don't have a lot of political power.

While the effective tax rate of large, profitable corporations was just 12.6 percent in 2010 and corporate profits are at an alltime high, the Republican budget does nothing to end the outrageous loopholes that allow major corporations to avoid $100 billion a year in taxes by shifting their profits to the Cayman Islands and other offshore tax havens.

Now, why would you ask large, profitable corporations that in some cases pay zero in Federal income taxes to start paying their fair share of taxes? These are powerful people. These are people who have lobbyists all over Capitol Hill. These are people who make campaign contributions. Why would we ask them to start paying their fair share of taxes?

At a time when billionaire hedge fund managers on Wall Street pay a lower effective tax rate than a truckdriver or a nurse, the Republican budget does not eliminate the carried interest loophole that will cost the Federal Government $16 billion in lost revenue over the next 10 years. The Republican budget protects over $40 billion in unnecessary and expensive tax breaks and subsidies for oil and gas companies even as the five largest oil companies alone made more than $1 trillion in profits over the last decade. Ask large, profitable oil companies to pay more in taxes? Don't be ridiculous—not when you can cut programs for hungry kids or cut Head Start or cut Pell grants for working-class young people.

Let me tell you what this budget does do. At a time when millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages, the Republican budget paves the way for a tax hike averaging over $900 per person for 13 million families—$900 apiece for more than 13 million families with 25 million children—by allowing the expansions of the earned-income tax credit and the child tax credit to expire.

So we can't ask billionaires who are doing phenomenally well to pay more in taxes. That we don't do. We can't ask corporations that stash their money in tax havens in the Cayman Islands to start paying their fair share of taxes. We can't do that. But what we can do is impact the lives of millions of working families by allowing the earned-income tax credit and the child tax credit to expire. In other words, we raise taxes for low-income Americans and working-class Americans and the middle class, but we do not ask the wealthy and large corporations to pay a nickel more in taxes.

Further, the Republican budget paves the way for a tax hike of about $1,100 for 12 million families and students paying for college by allowing the American opportunity tax credit to expire. So if you are a family trying to send your kid to college, you are going to have to pay more because our Republican colleagues are allowing the American opportunity tax credit to expire.

The Republican Senate budget would balance the budget on the backs of the elderly, the children, the sick, and the most vulnerable people in our society. It would slash investments in education, health care, nutrition, and affordable housing, while paving the way for another unpaid war by significantly increasing defense spending. It also would not ask millionaires, billionaires, and profitable corporations to contribute one penny for deficit reduction. No, it is only working families, the middle class, and low-income people who have to help us with deficit reduction, not billionaires or large corporations.

As we all know, the budget we are debating today is not an appropriations bill; it is a budget bill, which, by the way, is filled with magic asterisks—those little asterisks which tell us nothing about how Republicans are going to be moving toward a balanced budget. But by making over $5 trillion in budget cuts over the next decade—$5 trillion—reasonable estimates have been made about the harm those cuts would do to the American people.

At a time when the cost of college education is becoming out of reach for millions of Americans, the Republican budget would eliminate mandatory Pell grants, cutting this program by nearly $90 billion over 10 years, which would increase the cost of a college education to more than 8 million Americans.

Take a deep breath and think about this. Young people all over this country—and I know this because at a lot of Vermont high schools, when you talk to kids, they are wondering how they are going to be able to afford to go to college. They are worried about the high cost of college. The Republican solution is to cut—eliminate mandatory Pell grants, cutting this program by over $90 billion during a 10-year period. So what they are doing is making a very difficult situation even more difficult in terms of enabling the middle-class and working families in this country to be able to send their kids to college.

I think everybody who has children or grandchildren understands that we have a major preschool and childcare crisis in this country, and in Vermont and all over this Nation, it is very difficult for middle-income Americans to find decent, quality, affordable childcare or preschool education for their kids. Within that context of a crisis in childcare, the Republican solution is to give us a budget that would mean that 110,000 fewer young people, young children, would be able to enroll in Head Start over the next 10 years.

So we have a crisis in terms of higher education, and what they do is cut back on Pell grants, making it harder for families to send their kids to college. We have a crisis in childcare, and what the Republicans do is cut back on Head Start, meaning that 110,000 fewer young children would be able to get into the Head Start Program. Under the Republican budget, 1.9 million fewer students would receive the academic help they need to succeed in school because of some $12 billion in cuts to the title I education program. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act would be cut by $10 billion over the next decade, which would shift the cost to States and local school districts and could lead to increased property taxes for millions of Americans.

At a time when there are more than 20 million hungry Americans, people who in the course of the week are not quite sure how they are going to get the food they need to survive, when many working families are running to emergency food shelters in order to get the help they need to feed their families, the Republican budget would take some 1.2 million women, infants, and young people from the WIC Program, or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, which goes to pregnant women and new mothers. They would cut that by $10 billion over a 10-year period, impacting some 1.2 million women, infants, and young children.

Once again, we do not ask billionaires to start paying their fair share of taxes, but we tell the pregnant mother or the mother of a young child that the nutrition programs she has been receiving to make sure her kids are eating well are going to be cut by $10 billion over a 10-year period.

I come from a cold-weather State, and we have had a very rough February. Only yesterday, the weather in my hometown was about 10 degrees.

Under the Republican budget, up to 900,000 families would be denied the help they need to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer by cuts to the LIHEAP program, or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program—a $5 billion cut over the next decade impacting some 900,000 families. Many of the people on LIHEAP are seniors—a good percentage of them. These are elderly people without a lot of money in cold-weather States trying to keep warm in the wintertime. We are going to see a $5 billion cut in that program over the next decade.

In Vermont, and I think in many parts of this country, we have a real housing problem for low-income people. The cost of rent in many cases is much more than people can afford. People are spending 40, 50 percent of their limited incomes on rent.

To address that problem, the Republican budget would kick nearly half a million families off the section 8 affordable housing program and out of their homes by cutting section 8 by $46 billion over a 10-year period.

So you have low-income people all over this country—and I see it every day in Vermont—paying 40, 50, 60 percent of their income for rents, and what the Republican budget does is it cuts $46 billion over 10 years from section 8 housing, again, making a bad situation worse.

At a time when real unemployment is 11 percent, the Republican budget cuts job training and employment services for more than 2 million Americans.

So what we have is a budget which in many ways is a Robin Hood budget in reverse. At a time when the rich are getting richer and the middle class is getting poorer, the Republicans take from the middle class and working families to give more to the rich and large corporations.

The Republican budget has a set of priorities that are way, way, way out of touch with where the American people are.

During the next week, there are going to be a number of amendments being offered by Members on our side which will create jobs for the unemployed, raise wages for low-income workers, address the overtime crisis facing millions of Americans who are not getting time and a half when they should, provide pay equity for women workers, address this issue of tax breaks for the rich and large corporations, which are unconscionable and unsustainable. That is what we will be doing. I look forward to that debate and those amendments.

I note that Senator MARKEY is on the floor and has asked for 10 minutes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I wish to follow on the comments that were being articulated by the Senator from Vermont. He has done an excellent job laying out these issues for the American people to deliberate upon this week as we debate the budget of the United States of America.

Right now, millions of Americans are gripped by March Madness and the Final Four showdown, but for our Nation's seniors and the middle class, the real March madness is happening in Congress with the proposed Republican budget.

Our country isn't like the big dance. Our country was not built on a zero-sum game, where one side wins and the other side loses. But that is exactly what this Republican budget does. It picks winners, and it picks losers.

Let's take a look at the GOP's budget brackets. The Republican final four features their perennial favorites. In the first game, they have seniors versus special interests.

Well, in this Republican budget, it removes 11 million families from Medicaid, including 400,000 seniors in my State of Massachusetts alone. It turns Medicare into a voucher program. It forces millions of seniors, including 80,000 in Massachusetts who receive Medicare, to pay $1,000 more for their prescription drugs next year. It does all of this while preserving tax breaks for special interests, such as the deductions for corporate jets and for shipping jobs overseas.

The budget preserves billions for atomic bombs of the past—supported by the defense industry—which is why I introduced legislation today to cut $100 billion over 10 years from our bloated nuclear weapons program.

So there are no surprises yet in the GOP budget bracket. Special interests advance and seniors lose. That is the first match. Seniors lose. It is not unexpected.

In the next game, it is a battle of generations. It is the old guard of Wall Street against the new blood of our Nation, our students. So what does the GOP budget do?

Well, it cuts 8 million Pell grants for college students by almost one-third, making college less affordable for millions of young people and their families. It yanks 100,000 children from the Head Start Program over the next 10 years. It does all that while not meeting the needs of the Wall Street cops on the beat at the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, and it puts Americans at risk from predatory lenders and credit card scams by continuing the GOP effort to kill the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. So in the battle between the Wall Street boardrooms and America's classrooms, it is the big money over the little guy yet again.

In the next David versus Goliath matchup, it is America's working families against billionaires. Surely the spirit and character of America's working families is deserving of a win. But there is no Cinderella story with the Republican budget. That is because it kicks nearly 900,000 families off of low-income energy assistance. So families will need to decide between heating and eating.

This budget includes $660 billion in cuts over the next decade to Federal programs that lift up our most vulnerable, such as food stamps, school lunches, school nutrition programs—slashed, slashed, slashed. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 69 percent of nondefense cuts included in the House and Senate budget resolutions come from these programs that serve the poor, the sick, and the needy in our society.

This budget sticks to the Republican policy of not increasing the minimum wage, keeping millions of Americans who want to get into the middle class out of the game. Are the billionaires asked to do more with less? Do they have any tax breaks taken away? Do they pay a little more to make sure the less fortunate are better off?

No, the Republican refs make sure that the Republican playing field remains tilted in their favor. It is another win for the rich.

Now, the matchup we have all been waiting for is the Big Oil juggernaut against clean energy and climate change. In a Republican Senate, Big Oil is undefeated, but can upstart American clean energy companies pull out a win? Well, the Republican budget protects billions of dollars in subsidies to the oil companies while killing the wind energy tax credit. The Republican unwillingness to extend the tax credit has already cost us 30,000 American jobs in the last few years.

Republicans continue to deny the existence of climate change by stopping funding to protect communities against sea level rise and stronger storms, even though 2014 was the warmest year on record and extreme weather impacted every part of the country. It does all of this while handing over more of our public land to Big Oil and to coal companies instead of preserving it for all Americans.

So, who is the winner? No surprise, Big Oil. They keep all of their tax breaks, even as we are taking money away from seniors, from students, from working families, and from a clean energy future in our country. It is no surprise, because when you have the Republican budget final four—special interests, Wall Street, billionaires, and Big Oil—the fix was in from the start.

Unlike the March Madness games we love to watch each year, there are never any upsets in the Republicans' bracket. There are no budget buzzer beaters. In fact, the only ones upset here are grandma, grandpa, students, clean energy workers, and hardworking Americans.

Senate Republicans, once again, are trotting out their well-worn playbook to pick the winners and losers in our society and in our economy, because in this budget, there are clear winners and there are clear losers. Special interests score huge on big tax breaks. Wall Street gets to block legislation. Billionaires take a bigger share of the winnings, and Big Oil remains undefeated.

Meanwhile, American families and industries lose. Seniors pay more for health care. Working families pay more for energy. Students pay more for college. Clean energy companies cut more workers, stopping this incredible clean energy revolution in our country.

This is the real March madness, the Republican budget that makes winners out of Big Oil and billionaires, while the clock runs out on seniors and hardworking Americans, who are left to fend for themselves.

I implore my colleagues to reject this scheme and to create a plan that does not bust the budgets of families across this Nation. I call upon my colleagues to reject this completely and totally distorted sense of priorities for our country.

I call for my colleagues to put together a budget for the future of our country that invests in students, invests in clean energy, invests in research, and invests in what the 21st century should be all about, while we pay the proper respect to the seniors in our country.

We cannot leave behind the poor, the sick, and the elderly. We have obligations in this country. We understand that this country has been made the great country that it is—the greatest in the history of the world—by remembering our obligations to all of those who built our country—not just those in the upper 1 percentile, who have been the primary beneficiaries, but the other 99 percent who got up every single morning and went to work as well, the other 99 percent who built this country and its values from the ground up. We have an obligation to them as well. This Republican budget does not reflect that.

I urge a ''no'' vote on the Republican budget. I again thank my colleague from the State of Vermont for being an articulate, passionate, and moral voice that ensures that this debate is heard by every single person in our country.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I just want to reiterate what I think is the key point in this entire debate, and that point is whether we develop a budget that works for the vast majority of our families—working families, middle-class families who, in many instances, are working longer hours for lower wages—whether it works for our children at a time when we are experiencing the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country; whether it works for our elderly citizens who often have to make the choice about whether to heat their homes, buy the medicines they need or buy the food they need—and there are millions of people in that position—or do we have a budget that works for the top 1 percent of people who are doing phenomenally well or maybe even the top one-tenth of 1 percent.

I want to get back to this chart, which I think is real interesting. I want everybody to take a deep breath and think about this. At a time when the top one-tenth of 1 percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent, when the people on top, the very wealthiest Americans, are doing well almost beyond imagination, do we really want to cut food stamps and nutrition programs for hungry kids? Do we really want to make college education less affordable for working families? Do we really want to ask seniors to pay more for prescription drugs—those people trying to live on $13,000, $14,000 a year.

So here is the chart. This comes from Forbes magazine, not notably a left-wing publication. They simply give us the facts, and here are the facts. The top 14 wealthiest people in this country have seen their net worth increase by $157 billion over the last 2 years—14 people.

Do my Republican colleagues go to these people and say: You know what, you are Americans. We have a lot of problems here. Our middle class is disappearing. We have an infrastructure which is crumbling. We have millions of families who can't afford to send their kids to college. You, the top one-tenth of 1 percent, are doing phenomenally well. Is it so hard for my Republican colleagues to say to these people: Maybe you will have to pay a little more in taxes.

Let me list them. Bill Gates, in that 2-year period from 2013 to 2015, saw his wealth increase by $12 billion; Warren Buffet, $19 billion; Larry Ellison, $11 billion; Charles Koch, almost $9 billion; David Koch, almost $9 billion; Christy Walton, over $13 billion; Jim Walton, almost $14 billion; S. Robson Walton, $13 billion; Michael Bloomberg, $8.5 billion; Jeff Bezos, $9.6 billion; Mark Zuckerberg, $20 billion; Sheldon Adelson, $4.9 billion; Larry Page, $6.7 billion; and Sergey Brin, over $6 billion.

That is just the increase in their net worth in a 2-year period. Who can deny the very richest people in this country are doing phenomenally well? How do you ignore that reality? How do you not say to those people: You are going to have to help us with our infrastructure, with education, with our deficit.

But my Republican colleagues have a different approach. Their approach is to say to working families: Well, we are going to make it harder for your kids to get into Head Start. We are going to make it harder for you to get the nutrition programs you need to keep your family from going hungry. We are going to make it harder for seniors to get the prescription drugs they need.

So I think, with this budget, the choices are pretty clear. It is laid right out there. Republicans want to balance the budget on the backs of the elderly, the children, the sick and the poor, and protect all of these guys—not ask them to pay one nickel more in taxes. I think that is wrong from a moral perspective, from an economic perspective, and I think this is a budget that should be defeated.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, it is my understanding that reserved time is now available for the Joint Economic Committee, particularly in regard to presenting the report which is part of the budgetary process, so I will go forward with that.

It is an honor for me to serve as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee. One of the main roles of that committee is to report to the Senate Budget Committee and to my colleagues in the Senate on the state of the economy, and that is why I am here today.

Just last week, Dr. Jason Furman, the chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, appeared before the Joint Economic Committee to discuss this topic as well as to discuss the findings of the annual Economic Report of the President. Our committee is tasked with evaluating and responding to that President's Economic Report. Last week our committee released our findings and recommendations, and I am here today to present some of those findings.

We found that despite improvements in economic conditions over the past year, our economy remains stuck in second gear. Let me discuss why we have concluded that.

I often hear back home from Hoosiers—and I know my colleagues hear back home from people they represent—that we need to take action to grow the economy. I think it is safe to say that of course all of us in the Senate think the same way. But the age-old question in economics is this: How does a nation best create an environment for economic growth and raise living standards for its citizens?

We are now nearly 6 years into this recovery. While there are many encouraging signs of economic improvement, particularly in the last several months, the recovery has been modest and there still are many Americans in need of and still seeking meaningful job opportunities.

Since 1960, our Nation has experienced seven recessions and recoveries. The recoveries of the past 50 years provide comparative data to measure the progress of our current recovery. On the measures of GDP, jobs, and income growth, our current recovery ranks either dead last or second to last in all of those seven recoveries. Let me restate that.

In the last 50 years we have had 7 major recessions. Following those recessions has been an economic recovery. As things get sorted out, the economy kicks back in. If we take all those seven and we average them out in terms of what the results were following the recession, we get certain numbers. What we have seen now in this last recession is performance far under the average—in fact, dead last—of those seven. I will give a couple of metrics here.

Annual gross domestic product—the total of everything produced—has a value and grew 4 percent in the average post-1960 recovery, while this recovery has averaged just 2.3 percent of gross domestic product growth. So we are growing about half of the average of the previous recessions.

Personal income rose an average of 15.3 percent in the past recoveries. During this recovery, personal income has reached only 7.1 percent growth—less than half of what the average is for the previous seven recoveries.

At the same time, median household income has collapsed by $2,100 in real terms per family during this current recovery.

And while the pace of job creation has picked up recently, there are still 5.5 million fewer private sector jobs in this recovery than the average of past recoveries.

In addition, the labor force participation rate—the percentage of working-age Americans who have a job or are looking for a job—has fallen to 35-year lows. What this means is reduction in the unemployment rate over the past year is at least partially the result of many Americans giving up on looking for work. This, contrary to what our President said in his State of the Union Address, is not something to be proud of.

So we must ask ourselves: Why is this recovery so different? What does the future economic situation look like for the average American family?

In our Republican Joint Economic Committee Response, we find that these questions are addressed partly by the historic factors identified in the President's report.

For instance, there is mutual concern about the labor market scars that remain in the aftermath of the recent recession, as well as the challenges to restoring a more productive and participatory workforce. Where we differ with the President is on how to best address these problems and what policies we can offer that will return us to, at a minimum, the average of past recoveries. We are not asking for the Moon here. Although we would like to see growth exceed the average of the past, we are simply saying: What policies do we need to enact just to get back to the average recovery? And we are half of that, as I said.

We differ with the President on how best to address these problems and what policies we can offer that will return us, at a minimum, to the average of past recoveries. Unfortunately, we have found that many of the recommendations put forth in the President's report would not deliver the benefits the administration projects. For instance, the administration's proposal to increase the minimum wage would result in reduced job opportunities. That has been documented over and over in testimony before our committee by analysts and economists who have looked at this. It freezes out those seeking entry-level jobs—a start, a foot in the door, the ability to show you can come to work and do a good day's work, arrive on time and don't leave before your time ends. You could be a productive person, and up the ladder they go. That entry level is killed when we raise the minimum wage beyond what the market calls for. We end up losing a lot of small businesses that provide those entry-level jobs, or end up hiring on a part-time basis to avoid that result.

Additionally, the economic report of the President insufficiently addresses the challenges we face in terms of improving the American economy, improving economic mobility, preparing students in the workforce, enacting progrowth policies, and addressing our long-term fiscal challenges. Allow me, if I could, to discuss these items in greater detail.

Let's look at economic mobility. For example, the Obama administration continues to press income inequality as an issue, when it would be better to focus on policies that improve economic mobility. Economic mobility is far more important for Americans as they move through different stages of life—from making less income after graduation, to starting the process of building a career, building a resume, to building up earnings through a career experience, and establishing families, to accumulate savings for retirement, and other goals that all of us have gone through and many are going through and many hope to go through as they look forward to meaningful work in the future.

Despite good intentions, President Obama continues to pursue policies that impede job growth and real income growth. This restrains economic mobility.

Nearly 6 years now into the current recovery, Americans are only just beginning to see signs of significant income growth—and income growth feeds into upward economic mobility. My hope and our hope is this growth will continue to strengthen in the coming years. But we need a change of policies from this administration if this is going to happen.

Let's look at education reform. We also differ with the President in the area of education reform. It is becoming increasingly clear that traditional solutions no longer work in today's labor market. The connection between education and jobs is fractured, and repairing this connection requires collaboration with employers who know what skills their workers need.

Education remains an area ripe for reform, yet the Obama administration has preferred to promote the idea of making community college free rather than focus on the existing education deficits experienced by so many students across the country. Many low-income Americans are already able to receive a community college education for free if they are eligible for Pell grants. But the real question here is: What kind of curriculum will they be taking as they enter the education process? To simply go into a system that is not coordinating and cooperating with the private industry in terms of the skills needed for them to grow and to join that particular means of production is sadly lacking in the President's proposals.

Today, many of the classes offered at community colleges are remedial. They are compensating for deficits in education at the high school level. Many students find themselves unprepared for even the most basic postsecondary courses at the community college and university levels, let alone for skilled jobs that offer good pay. Until we address this fundamental foundational underpinning in terms of how to receive the right education, we have to address these questions rather than just simply say: Everybody go; don't worry, the taxpayer will pay for your tuition; take whatever courses you want. That simply is not the model.

In Indiana, we have a consolidated model now, working with private industry and our 2-year colleges, which is producing terrific results because we are matching the skills needed with the curriculum and teaching that provides those needs.

For these students, finding a good job remains a challenge, as does our ability to address those in this category who have given up looking for a job. That takes us to the labor participation rate.

The labor force participation rate for those age 20 to 29 is more than 4 percent lower now than in 2007. And the lower that goes, the easier it is to achieve an unemployment number that sounds good but really is false because the factor of labor participation is skewing the results.

Furthermore, for those who find a job in that 20-to-29 category, the Federal Reserve board survey of young workers reveals that only 42 percent of those surveyed reported having a job that is closely related to their field of study. Students' time and resources need to be better invested so they can enter the workforce truly equipped, and without needless delay and countless dollars spent on a degree that leaves them unemployed or jobless. This is a major challenge to our education system, and the President's education proposals fall far short of the reforms needed to address these challenges.

Let's look at growth and productivity—absolutely essential if we are going to have a growing economy and provide more jobs for more people. As it stands, the United States remains one of the most productive economies in the world. We can treasure that. We can celebrate that. However, much concern remains about whether America will be able to sustain that productivity of which it proved capable over the last half century, but there is a real question today as to whether that can be sustained.

Business creation, entrepreneurship, and technological innovations have slowed over the past decade, alarmingly. If these trends prove to be more than temporary, then they will have negative consequences for America's standard of living.

Productivity and labor force participation growth alone cannot address the Federal spending problems that have been years in the making. It appears the administration has not stopped to consider the effects of existing regulations and government policies.

ObamaCare's effects on labor force participation and hours worked continue to drive down productivity. Economist Casey Mulligan estimates that, if fully implemented, by 2017 ObamaCare's long-term effect will translate to roughly 3 percent less in weekly employment—3 percent fewer total hours worked, and 2 percent less in labor income. That is not how to boost productivity. That is a killer of increase in productivity.

Nonetheless, the Obama administration prefers to add more spending programs to the existing structure in an attempt to counterbalance the current disincentives to work.

In contrast, we—Republicans on the committee—believe aggressive action on progrowth policies will improve the future economic situation of American families.

As we detail our report to Congress, there are three areas where immediate opportunity to kick-start our economy and provide for the sustained growth needed to address the current fiscal and economic growth challenges we face that need to be implemented—one, comprehensive tax reform; two, implementation of foreign trade agreements; and three, regulatory relief. Let's take those three in a little deeper discussion.

Tax reform. The need for comprehensive, pro-growth tax reform could not be clearer. There is admission on both sides of the aisle in this Chamber—the Republicans and the Democrats—that we have gone far too long in terms of dealing with tax reform of our current taxation system. The Administration and Members of Congress in both parties agreed that it's broken. It is loaded with so many exemptions, exclusions, subsidies, credits, special interest provisions, rules and regulations, it is incomprehensible to fathom the complexity of this current system. It is hurting our economy.

For example, the U.S. corporate tax rate is the highest in the developed world. If American businesses are going to be able to compete in a global market, it has to be significantly lower. There is consent on this. The President has acknowledged that this is needed and that this is the case. Yet we see little if any policy coming forward—direct policy—from the White House and from our Democratic friends as to whether we should go forward.

I am hopeful that the Ways and Means Committee in the House and the Finance Committee in the Senate, of which I am a Member, will take this seriously and will address this issue in a comprehensive way. Unfortunately, the President's framework may not lead to the desired goals of productivity and other economic gains because with a tax code of 4 million words and compliance costs to American families and businesses equaling $168 billion a year, it is not surprising that 9 out of 10 Americans turn to a paid preparer or computer software to calculate their tax burden. Six billion hours are spent every year by Americans simply trying to figure out their tax return or get their tax return taken care of, and an extraordinary amount of money is spent on having someone else prepare that return because it is simply incomprehensible for most Americans to address.

Progrowth tax reform would simplify the Tax Code for individuals and families, reduce the corporate rate, lower individual rates paid by small businesses, and make our individual tax system more competitive in the global market. By comparison, the Administration's suggested 28 percent corporate tax rate and hybrid territorial and worldwide tax system would still place the United States among the highest global tax rates and would still continue to put American businesses at a competitive disadvantage.

Let's look at trade. Another area of agreement between Congress and the administration, so-called, is the pursuit of more trade opportunities. President Obama's National Export Initiative aimed to increase the level of exports to $3.14 trillion before 2015 in order to support up to 2 million jobs, but it fell far short of that goal.

The opportunity to improve GDP growth is available now, pending the administration's efforts to secure trade promotion authority to finalize new trade agreements. During the State of the Union Address, one of the few topics that brought Republicans to their feet, cheering in support, was the President's call for trade promotion authority. Yet, it appears—and I remain concerned—that the President and the administration are not really working hard enough and putting the pressure on their own party Members to secure the necessary support of Congress to achieve this much needed result.

The President should fully engage with Congress to ensure passage of trade promotion authority. This is a necessary policy if we are to get the kind of economic growth we need. With these trade agreements, we can expand market access for American goods and services and improve the economic well-being of Americans and of citizens in our trade partner countries.

Regulatory burden. We have to stem the rising tide of regulatory redtape. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, the cost of complying with Federal regulations exceeds $1.75 trillion every year for U.S. businesses, and it disproportionately affects small businesses. This amounts to more than $10,500 per American worker.

Furthermore, the administration has launched an aggressive assault on fossil fuels and the low-cost electricity they provide. In addition to the EPA's harmful carbon regulations, the administration has unleashed more than a dozen rules aimed at eliminating coal-fired plants in the United States.

We cannot neglect the costs and effects of new major regulations under ObamaCare and Dodd-Frank that continue to subdue business investment and job growth.

Taken individually, each burdensome regulation increases costs to American families and slows economic growth. Taken collectively, these regulations hang as a giant albatross around the necks of working people and American businesses, both large and small. To reduce excessive regulations, Federal agencies need to review and remove outdated and ineffective rules and should more fully evaluate the costs and benefits of any proposed rule.

I would like to turn now to the long-term effects and fiscal health that is a challenge to all, each and every one of us. I have spoken at some length about this recent recovery and our report's findings. In addition to working to improve the recovery in the short term, we must also address the greatest threat to a successful economic America—our long-term fiscal health.

Earlier this year, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office issued its updated budget and economic outlook for the next decade. The report warned that under current law, if we just stay where we are and don't make adjustments, ''large and growing federal debt would have serious negative consequences, including increasing federal spending for interest payments; restraining economic growth in the long term; giving policymakers less flexibility to respond to unexpected challenges; and eventually heightening the risk of a fiscal crisis.''

Federal Reserve Chairman Yellen said essentially the same thing when she appeared last year before the Joint Economic Committee. Her answer highlighted why the long-term deficits Washington currently is projected to run must be addressed. I put that question to Chairman Yellen, Chairman of the Fed, and this was her answer:

> There is more work to do to put fiscal policy on a sustainable course... Progress has been made over the last several years in bringing down deficits in the short term, but [through] a combination of demographics, the structure of entitlement programs, and historic trends in health-care costs, we can see that, over the long term, deficits will rise to unsustainable levels relative to the economy.

With these comments, the Fed Chairwoman joined a long list of academics, economists, and business leaders who have all stated the obvious: Unless the United States makes politically difficult but absolutely necessary spending choices in the near term, eventually we are going to face a debt-induced crisis in the future. It is only a matter of time. The clock is running down. We continue to postpone the ever-more-necessary policy changes that will help us avoid the coming fiscal crisis. It is there for everybody to see. That clock has been running now for tens of years. Republican Presidents and Democratic Presidents have watched this grow, the deficit spending and national debt—plunge into national debt at a staggering rate. The consequences will come home to roost, and they will affect not only our own generation but in particular our children's generation and our grandchildren's generation and generations to come if we don't address this.

In fact, if interest rates were not artificially held down by the Fed at historically low levels, we might already be facing our day of reckoning. According to the Congressional Budget Office, even a 1 percentage point increase in interest rates would add $1.7 trillion to the deficits of the United States over a 10-year period of time. That is just a 1-percent increase in interest rates. If we go back to average, we will be looking at a 3-percent or 4-percent or maybe even a 5-percent interest rate level. Each one would cost us $1.7 trillion over a 10-year period of time. That new debt would occur without any changes in spending or taxing; interest rates alone would simply drive our debt out of control. It is a ticking time bomb, a fiscal ticking time bomb that must be addressed.

While the administration has taken credit for the current reduction in our annual deficit, overall debt has increased dramatically under President Obama—from $10.6 trillion to almost $18.2 trillion just during his term of office. And they brag about making progress? Yes, the deficit is smaller than it was in the early years of the Obama administration, but it is still a deficit of half a trillion dollars a year, and it is going to spike dramatically within 2 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. What a bag of misery turned over to the next President.

In addition, the reduction in our budget deficits is only temporary, as I just said, because the conclusion of the Congressional Budget Office is that this will spike in 2017 and publicly held debt as a percent of GDP will continue to rise in the second half of the coming decade. Yet, the CBO's projections of deficits and publicly held debt over the next decade does not tell the whole story. The debt will continue to climb to unsustainable levels over the next three decades—30 years of climbing into even more debt. By the end of that time, we will owe our creditors more than our entire economy produces in 1 year. Let me say that again. At the end of that period—the next three decades—we will owe our creditors more than our entire economy is worth. What a gift to our children. Thanks a lot.

Thanks for ignoring doing what you needed to do. You saw it coming. You talked about it on the floor of the Senate. Everybody saw what was happening, and no one had the will to stand up or too few had the will to stand up and do something about it.

It is reckless policy. It is dangerous. We have an obligation to the American people. We have a moral obligation to our future children and grandchildren to address this and to act responsibly.

There have been several bipartisan attempts, both in Congress and by outside groups, to address this ticking time bomb. Groups such as Fix the Debt, the Business Roundtable, the Domenici-Rivlin effort at the Bipartisan Policy Center—all tried to develop solutions and present them. They did present them to us, and it is clear for everyone to see. Official government efforts were undertaken—Simpson-Bowles, the Gang of 6, the supercommittee that resulted from the Budget Control Act, and the dinner club of Senators, which I participated in, that met directly with the President and his senior advisers. Unfortunately, all of these efforts, all of the effort put into this, all of the alarms that were ringing—all of this failed to reach agreement.

I am particularly disappointed with the failure of the final effort, which began with Senators and the White House seeking to go big and ultimately got to the point where it was hardly worth putting anything in place. Even when we took the President's own recommendations and sent them to him for approval, they were rejected.

Despite the inability to reach agreements in the past, we must not give up, my colleagues. We must not give up. We must continue to focus on this greatest fiscal threat perhaps in the history of our country. It is something we have a moral responsibility to tackle, a moral responsibility to put our future careers in jeopardy by making the right choices. You know what, I think if we did that, the American people are wise enough to know now that that would be rewarded rather than condemned, that we would receive support for our future interest in elected office rather than rejection. The country understands maybe more—or at least reacts to maybe more than we in this body do because year after year after year we continue to fail to do what we all know we need to do.

Despite the inability to reach agreements in the past, as I said, we should not give up. The administration and the Congress must make tough fiscal choices now so future generations will have an opportunity to reach their potential and not be saddled with an even higher burden of debt.

We must make reforms to our mandatory spending programs to tackle out-of-control Federal spending. Congress should also pass sensible policies that will help create jobs and grow the economy. This is our priority and this is what need to do.

I will conclude by talking about the Republican budget plan that we have begun to debate and will be debating this week and offering amendments and ultimately voting by the end of the week.

We know that job creators and future entrepreneurs see today's large debt levels as tomorrow's likely tax hikes, interest rate increases, and inflationary pressures. So we must lift the cloud of uncertainty that is hanging over our economy. This is the first budget we have debated on the Senate floor in 2 years. This is a budget plan that is so vital to the future of our economy and the future of America. We have lacked such focused direction in the form of a budget over the past several years and that has hurt Americans. Americans need to know what is coming and what to expect. We need to move off of the word ''certainty'' so that business owners, American families, and everyone engaged in this economy knows what the rules are, knows what is coming, and has a clear picture of where we stand even if there are some areas that they are in disagreement with.

They need to know the Federal Government is carefully managing its spending and revenues. Every American family and business must have a budget and live within their means, and it is about time Washington does the same.

I am pleased to be here talking about this Republican budget resolution that was led by the Senator from Wyoming, and many of us participated. I am not on that committee, but I commend them for the work they have done in bringing forth a budget for us to talk about, debate, amend, pass, and then live by. Certainly no budget is perfect. This budget takes several important steps to putting our country back on the right fiscal track.

Most importantly, this budget resolution balances the budget over 10 years. We must stop spending more than we take in. We must move toward a balanced budget. I have long been a proponent of a constitutional amendment to require us to do this, as is done in many of our States. We have to live up to the responsibilities of our oath to the Constitution and to not spend more than we take in. We do that in Indiana, and we have a successful economy and a successful legislature that has made that the case, but it is severely and sorely lacking here in Washington.

In contrast to the Republican budget, the President's budget does not come close to balancing the budget. In fact, for all of the administration's praise of the short-term reductions in the annual deficit, the President's budget predicts increases in deficits starting in 2018—yes, it is going to be dumped in somebody else's lap—and an $800 billion deficit in 2025.

Our Republican budget helps address the issue of underfunding the Department of Defense. It boosts defense spending by a necessary amount of money above the President's request because, along with the debt bomb, we have a terrorist bomb—potentially marrying terrorists with weapons of mass destruction—and a strong America and strong military are absolutely necessary to address the threats we see burgeoning all over the world today. Our budget addresses this specific question and strengthens our national defense.

It helps preserve our safety net programs. It does not change Social Security, yet it will benefit Social Security by shoring up our broader finances and achieving stronger economic growth and increased employment.

In addition, the budget extends the solvency of the Medicare trust fund by calling for the same level of Medicare savings as called for by the President. Let me be clear. Our budget does not call for the same policies as the President. We would instead achieve these savings through policies based on free-market principles.

The budget also seeks to improve the Medicaid Program by increasing State flexibility, and it seeks to help economic growth by promoting several progrowth policies, including tax reform, reducing the impact of Federal regulations, promoting free trade, investing in infrastructure, and enhancing U.S. energy security.

Finally, the Republican budget provides the means for addressing the flawed, confusing, distorted, tax-laden policy of ObamaCare. The repeal of ObamaCare provides flexibility to replace this disastrous law with health care solutions that bring down the cost of care and protect the vulnerable.

I will conclude by saying and reiterating what this Senate Republican budget resolution accomplishes. It balances the budget in 10 years, ensures flexibility for funding national defense, provides repeal and replacement of ObamaCare, protects Americans from new tax hikes, preserves Social Security, extends Medicare trust fund solvency, improves Medicaid, supports stronger economic growth, and enhances U.S. energy security.

I am proud my Senate colleagues have drafted a plan to return our spending to a sustainable path toward a balanced budget, and I am hopeful this is the beginning of responsible action and look forward to debating and passing the Republican budget this week.

Again, I commend the chairman and his committee for bringing forth a budget that is sorely needed and will give Americans a clear picture of a different path than this administration has proposed.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, March 23, at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, Calendar No. 19; that the Senate then vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, that no further motions be in order, that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, writing and passing a budget is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of any legislative body. Unfortunately, it is something we have not done in the U.S. Congress since 2009. It is outrageous. It should be considered a scandal.

Today I will take a few minutes to discuss the budget we have before us today and how we intend to discharge our responsibilities to the American people in the 114th Congress. Of course, one of the most important parts of a budget is that you have to determine what your priorities are—things you have to have, things you want but maybe need to defer, and things you want but maybe cannot afford.

When it comes to the budget Chairman ENZI and the Senate Budget Committee have produced, our priority is clear. Our priority is to protect the hard-working taxpayers of this country. Where do we start and how does the Senate Republican budget get America on the right track, boosting economic growth and job creation?

To start with, this budget actually balances and puts us on the path so we can begin to pay down our national debt, and it is important to say that it does so without raising taxes. Those seem like pretty straightforward goals for any budget, but unfortunately that has not been the case in recent years.

Throughout his 6 years in office and in the budgets he has sent to Congress, President Obama seems to be committed to the notion that the only way Washington can revive strong economic growth is by steadily growing the government. Unfortunately, at the same time you end up adding to deficits and debt in the process.

Yes, it is true that we have had an experiment in the size and role of government over the last 6 years, and I must say we are no longer talking about esoteric theories that were debated in the Federalist Papers or during the founding of our country. We now actually have hard evidence. We have things we can point to that show this has been a failed experiment.

Under this administration, our national debt—and the bills, not that I will have to pay, but these young people and my children will have to pay—has gone from $10.6 trillion to more than $18 trillion. I know those numbers are almost meaningless to most of us because we simply cannot conceive of numbers that big.

The latest budget from the President adds another trillion in tax increases and never balances—ever, while, in fact, the budget which was voted out of the Budget Committee and is now before us on the floor of the Senate actually brings us a surplus, and the President's budget would leave our country with a massive deficit of over $800 billion in its final year.

The last budget proposed by our friends across the aisle, Senate Democrats in 2013, would have hit the economy with another $1 trillion in taxes and added more than $7 trillion to our national debt.

I believe, based on the failed experiment of the last few years, we should conclude that just taxing and spending is not going to allow us to achieve the kind of prosperity and economic growth we all so badly want. America's debt is a real danger, and one that apparently the President chooses to ignore, and our friends across the aisle, in their budget proposals, seem to ignore it as well.

The reason our debt is so dangerous is because it makes us vulnerable to fiscal shocks and shocks to our national security and makes it much harder for us to respond to them, and our debt obviously costs money to service. We need to pay interest to the people who buy our bonds, our national debt, and when interest rates go back up from where they are now, which is a historically low rate, more and more of the hard-earned tax dollars the American people will be paying to the Federal Government will be used not to pay down the debt but will be used to pay interest on the debt to the people who own it, countries such as China and other sovereign entities that purchase that debt. We will be paying interest on that debt in a way that makes us dangerously vulnerable not only to fiscal shock, but also crowds out our ability to deal with other priorities, such as law enforcement, education, national security, and the like.

Last year the Congressional Budget Office pointed out that in the past few years debt held by the public will be significantly greater relative to the gross domestic product than at any time just after World War II. Our debt will be higher relative to our economy than at any time since World War II.

What does that mean to my fellow Texans? The CBO goes on to say that with a debt so large, Federal spending on interest payments will increase substantially as interest rates rise to more typical levels. That is what I was just referring to. The other thing that happens is that as the Federal Government's debt goes up, we basically reduce national savings and capital stock at the same time and wages will be smaller. In other words, our national massive debt is hurting economic growth today. It is hurting our economy, and it virtually assures that it will get worse in the days ahead.

The good news is it doesn't have to be that way, and this budget puts us on a path to balance and one that begins to pay down the debt, not adding to the debt with more taxing and spending along the way. And the good news is we don't have to start from scratch and reinvent the wheel.

There are better options, many of which are reflected in the budget we have proposed and will be voting on this week. There are policies and programs in the budget that we have borrowed which have proven to be successful around the country in States such as Texas and others.

My State, in particular, has experienced an economic surge that has seen a boom in job creation and exports and it has been named the best State in the Nation in business 10 years running. Some people have actually called this the Texas miracle, but I take issue with that characterization. There is nothing miraculous about what has happened in Texas when we talk about the economy because you cannot explain a miracle, but it is no secret why Texas has been one of the leading job creation engines over the last several years. If we ask business leaders, they will tell us what makes Texas such an attractive place to do business.

In Texas, we know we should not punish job creators with taxes that discourage investment and overregulation, which make it hard to make the bottom line balance. We are not ashamed of our abundance of natural resources, nor are we apologetic about encouraging its development. The results have been extraordinary.

For example, Texas added nearly 460,000 jobs in 2014 alone—460,000 jobs in 2014—more than any other State. Despite being home to about 8.5 percent of the total U.S. population, Texas accounted for nearly one-third of all new job gains during the last 10 years for the Nation. Simply put, what we have shown is what can be accomplished with sound public policy that allows for job creation and economic prosperity, and that is the good news. It is not a fluke. It is not a miracle. It is about good policies actually working to benefit the people of my State and that could also be put to work for the American people.

We can take strategies that have worked in the States and lessons we have learned in these laboratories of democracy and apply them here in Washington on a greater scale for the benefit of the entire Nation. Simply put, it boils down to lower taxes, sensible regulations, and a lower level of per capita government spending.

What happens under those conditions is that the private sector is willing to invest, and when they invest, they create jobs and grow the economy, and we all benefit, including the government, by increased tax revenue. The government doesn't benefit, nor do the people benefit, when government policies discourage investment and job creation and economic growth, which is what has been happening over the last few years.

In the budget before us, which balances without tax hikes, we can protect taxpayers and foster an economic environment that allows jobs and opportunity to blossom.

Gallup released a survey earlier this month that talked about the biggest concerns facing the American people. The top concern was government. They are concerned about their government. The second was the economy, and the third was jobs. All three of those concerns actually tie neatly together because many Americans now feel they don't have the same opportunities they once had. Maybe they have been laid off or had a tough time finding a new job that is as rewarding for them personally and financially. Maybe they are actually working as hard as they ever did, but they are actually making less money than they did 10 years ago.

If people are deeply concerned, as I am, about the availability of good jobs and the state of our economy, it only makes sense that people would not be satisfied with the government as well. These concerns transcend geographic, partisan, and demographic boundaries, and they are shared by Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike.

Sadly, one of the statistics that hasn't gotten better over the last few years, even though the unemployment rate has crept down, is the percentage of the American people—the workforce—who have actually left the job market and given up looking for a job, and that remains at a near historical high—about a 30-year high—the so-called labor participation rate. So when the unemployment rate goes down and we say, Oh, that is a good thing, a lot of the reason it is going down is because fewer and fewer people are actually looking for work and they have dropped out altogether. That is a bad thing.

Most people don't see themselves as future business owners; they simply hope to find a good job doing something that provides them the ability to put food on the table and to take care of their families, and that gives them a sense of satisfaction for a job well done. Yet, as we know, small businesses are the lifeblood of the economy, and it is the small businesses that actually help create the jobs that most hard-working taxpayers are occupied in. So if we are making it harder for small businesses to create jobs, we are also making it harder on workers to find jobs.

As I travel my State and talk to small business men and women, they tell me one of the biggest challenges they have had is something the President trumpets here in Washington as a grand success; that is, ObamaCare because ObamaCare has been a job killer. This budget assumes full repeal of ObamaCare, and it gives us the opportunity to make good on our promises and finally remove one of the biggest roadblocks to job growth. Is that because we don't care about health care? Well, no; exactly the opposite. What we intend to do as a replacement is to replace ObamaCare with affordable health care that provides people access to the kind of quality care they want for themselves and their families.

The irony of ObamaCare is that it spends and taxes so much, and yet still 30 million people are uninsured. Many people find the health insurance they purchased—even on the exchanges—has high premiums, which basically render them uninsured to the extent that they can't even afford it, and it has raised their premium costs by adding mandates for coverage they don't want and they don't need.

We can do much better.

Now, I have heard the President and some of his allies say, Well, we have to have ObamaCare because we need to cover young adults up to the age of 26 who can be covered under their parents' policy or we need ObamaCare because we need to cover people with preexisting conditions. The fact is we can do both of those things. We will do both of those things, and we don't need everything else that comes with it.

We also need to capitalize on an energy boom that is taking place across the United States. This budget boosts development of American-made energy. Unfortunately, the President decided to put his party and his politics ahead of American job seekers recently when he vetoed a bipartisan bill to construct the Keystone XL Pipeline that the State Department said would create 42,000 jobs—construction jobs to start with—and a number of other jobs thereafter. It would also provide an alternative means to transport oil from a friendly ally, Canada, and we wouldn't have to ship so much of it in railcars over the surface, which is admittedly a much more dangerous and volatile situation.

The President, when he vetoed the Keystone XL Pipeline, took basically the opposite approach to what we have taken in my State and other States around the country, where we have seen our natural resources and the development of those natural resources as a way to grow jobs and grow the economy.

In Texas, we have produced 94 percent more oil between September 2008 and September 2012. That has been primarily due to the innovation of the oil and gas industry and the so-called shale oil and gas revolution, which transformed States such as North Dakota and Texas, and in places such as Pennsylvania where the Marcellus shale exists. The Eagle Ford, the Barnett, and the Haynesville shale plays in Texas have been economic boons in my State and created thousands of jobs and added hundreds of thousands of dollars to the tax rolls.

As my friends along the border of Texas and Mexico remind me, those natural resources do not stop at the international border. Indeed, I was recently in Mexico City with our colleague, Senator KAINE from Virginia, where we met with a number of oil and gas company representatives at the American Chamber of Commerce in Mexico City, talking about the change in the Mexican law which now will encourage private investment in developing their natural resources in Mexico. Of course, the better the Mexican economy does, the better our economy does, and the fewer people who feel as though they have to immigrate to the United States in order to provide for their family.

This budget is a responsible budget. It balances in 10 years, it doesn't raise taxes, and it begins a downpayment on our national debt. It sends a very important message that the 114th Congress and the new majority are very serious about discharging the most basic responsibilities of governance—something that hasn't been done since 2009, since the last time we had a budget, but we also learn from the States when it comes to protecting taxpayers and removing barriers to growth and how that helps not only the small businesses but the people who work at the jobs created by those small businesses.

In conclusion, there is one other thing this budget does. We know that since the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the sequestration that occurred—the automatic caps on spending that occurred as a result of the failure of the supercommittee to come up with a grand bargain—our Nation has spent less and less on our national security. That has given rise not only to deep concerns by many of us, including the Presiding Officer, about America's role in the world and the message we are sending to our adversaries, but it also raises the question of what is the primary purpose—what should be the No. 1 priority of the Federal Government? I believe, and I think many of us believe, that national security is the most important priority of the Federal Government. We have kind of lost sight of that in recent years with the budget caps and sequestration. We have tried to be responsible about spending. Unfortunately, with an unhelpful partner in the White House, sequestration seemed to be the only way we could keep a cap on runaway discretionary spending, higher deficits, and greater debt. But I think now is the time for this Congress to step up and say that national security is our No. 1 priority. This budget does just that, and it provides additional resources necessary for the Department of Defense to make sure we not only maintain our status as the preeminent military power in the world but also keep our commitment to our military families and those who have chosen to make the armed services a career.

We also send a very important message to our adversaries that America will not shrink or retreat from its leadership role on the world stage. Unfortunately, I think as a result of not only our budgetary decisions but also a number of missteps and missed signals by the administration, some of our adversaries have gotten the idea we are in retreat and that we are somehow pulling back and going to be rendered a spectator rather than a leader on the world stage. Perhaps the single most important thing this budget does is it says, America is back as the leader of the free world and we will not shrink and we will not turn our back on our responsibility not only to ourselves and our people but to our friends and allies across the world.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, in a moment I am going to yield for Senator KAINE, but before I do that, I just want to make a few points based on the remarks from my friend, the Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN.

When Senator CORNYN talked about military spending—and how much we should spend on the military is a very important debate. We now spend more money than the next nine countries combined. But as we talk about the deficit and the debt, I would remind my colleagues and the American people that one of the reasons our national debt is at $18 trillion and one of the reasons our deficit is as high as it is is because under President Bush, we went to war in Iraq and we went to war in Afghanistan, and we put those wars on the credit card. We didn't pay for them.

On Thursday, at the Senate Budget Committee meeting, an amendment was passed to add another $38 billion of defense spending to the deficit. So I have a little bit of a problem understanding all of my Republican friends coming down here and saying: We are really concerned about the deficit and the debt. We are going to have to cut back on Head Start. We are going to have to cut back on health care. We are going to have to cut back on the Meals On Wheels programs for seniors. We are going to have to cut back on Pell grants, making it harder for young people to go to college. We just can't afford those things anymore because the deficit is so high. But, when it comes to military spending, we don't have to worry about the deficit at all.

I have a real problem with that, and I suspect that within the next couple of days there will be an amendment on the floor which makes it very clear that if people want to go into another war—and I certainly hope we do not go into another war; I think two wars is quite enough—but if people want to vote for another war, they are going to have to pay for that war and not pass that debt on to our kids and our grandchildren.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor for the Senator from Virginia, Mr. KAINE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Thank you, Madam President. I thank my colleague from Vermont who has done an able job as the ranking member on the Budget Committee.

I rise today to talk about the budget resolution that we are considering on the floor of the Senate this week.

I came to the Senate in 2013 with a background as a mayor and a Governor. I believe in getting budgets done and getting them done on time. Doing budgets under regular order is an important priority, and I have enjoyed and look forward to more work with colleagues on budgeting matters.

Quickly, we have been in a budget crisis of our own making in Congress. It is not someone else's fault. It is not the President's fault. The budget crisis we have been in has been of Congress's making. In August of 2011, when one House pushed the country to the verge of defaulting on our debt for the first time in our history, in order not to default we came up with the idea of the sequester. This was before I was in the Senate, but the basic idea was this: Let's impose punishing across-the-board cuts on all of these Federal spending levels to begin in March of 2013 to force us to try to come up with a better deal. I call that ''let's try to do something good, and if we don't, then let's do something really stupid.'' I don't know that this is a principle you should ever apply.

When I came to the Senate on the verge of sequester going into effect, my first floor speech as a Senator and one of my first votes was this: OK, we didn't find the budget deal that some wanted, but let's not do something stupid. Let's not embrace the sequester and hurt priorities that matter to people every day. Sadly, we couldn't get the 60 votes to cut off the sequester in the Senate. So since March of 2013, we have been in sequester mode. I said in committee and I will say again: The sequester violates every good principle of budgeting I have learned as either a public sector budgeter as a mayor and a Governor or as a private sector budgeter managing a multinational law firm with lawyers on three continents. Nobody would do budgeting this way. The United States, because of Congress, is doing budgeting this way, and I think we need to come up with a better solution.

During the last Congress we did find a better solution. It wasn't a perfect solution, but the Murray-Ryan budget act did a 2-year budgetary framework that eliminated half of these punishing sequester cuts and gave a significant lift to the economy.

The economy has generally been pretty strong, cutting deficits but also avoiding some of the mindless austerity that full sequester means.

A good budget for the country—and I am sad to say that the budget we will be debating on the floor this week is not a good budget for the country—but a good budget for the country would do a couple of things. It would put the promotion of growth and jobs first. The best antideficit strategy—if that is what you are interested in—is promoting a strong economy, and job growth would be the first priority. Second, we would replace a mindless across-the-board sequester with a more targeted approach. If we did that, we could credibly reduce deficits rather than reducing deficits in a way that hurts the economy and punishes programs that matter to people.

The economy and jobs side, we will grow the economy and grow jobs if we do things such as moving away from unnecessary austerity and promoting infrastructure. My colleague from Vermont has a strong proposal about infrastructure that we debated in committee and we will be debating this week. If you did infrastructure and other investments in human capital, you could credibly reduce sequester and increase jobs. We could also increase jobs if we had a tax code that didn't punish work, that didn't punish labor, wages, and salary the way this one does.

The second way would be to restore key spending priorities and replace sequester with a targeted approach. We should be focusing on a budget that maintains a strong national defense; that keeps our promises to veterans; that invests in education, especially important programs such as Head Start, pre-K, and college affordability.

We can protect Federal employees, we can protect programs for people of low and moderate incomes, such as SNAP or Pell grants, and we could ensure the environment is protected if we followed targeted strategies. That would be better.

Finally, growing the economy and pursuing targeted budget strategies would enable us to credibly reduce the deficit. It is important to note that the deficit has been coming down since the Murray-Ryan budget deal was done, and that is important. But that is not the budget that will be on the floor this week.

Last Thursday we voted a budget out of committee. It was a long day of debating and voting. I was able to support a number of amendments, and I had some of my own and others that were passed, and I appreciate them. But I ultimately voted against the budget, and unless there will be dramatic changes on the floor of the Senate, I will, in all likelihood, be voting against the budget for the following reasons:

First, the budget before us proposes cuts to nondefense discretionary programs—education, infrastructure, research—the nondefense, noninterest, nonentitlement programs that are about 14 to 15 percent of the Federal budget. It proposes not just cutting those to full sequester levels but cutting them by an additional $236 billion over 10 years. Even the sequester levels are untenable, slashing these programs even further to make college more expensive, to spend less on infrastructure, and to spend less on research. It is foolish for the Nation.

The budget proposes $4 trillion in unspecified cuts to programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, but it only includes a budget reconciliation instruction totaling $2 billion, which leaves a very unusual gap in the terms of how we are going to find magically the $4 trillion in cuts. The budget depends on gimmicks and sort of magic tricks to achieve balance, when we are not really achieving balance.

It uses outdated baseline proposals by the CBO. We just had CBO numbers come in this March from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, showing that the country, because of an improving economy, is poised to collect more revenue and poised to spend less on some key programs. Instead of using that baseline data—the March data—the budget we worked on in committee used worse January data to make the situation seem more dire than it is. I don't know why we would do this. We should use the most updated numbers.

Finally, I voted against the budget because it contained a critical dishonesty. It proposed to do two things simultaneously that violate the basic laws of physics. The two measures are this: First we are going to entirely repeal the Affordable Care Act. However, all the taxes we are collecting from companies and people to pay for the Affordable Care Act—we are going to keep all of those in the budget. So we will repeal all of the benefits, all of the coverage, all of the protection that tens of millions of Americans get under the Affordable Care Act, but we will keep taxing people and companies and keep all that tax revenue in the budget. Clearly, both of those things are not going to happen. So the budget has this air of unreality about it.

But to me, the unreality of the numbers is even dwarfed in importance by just the flat statement that we are going to repeal the Affordable Care Act. There are many things I can say about the Affordable Care Act. Why don't I just pick one? That is that 16.4 million Americans are receiving insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act. What does this budget say will happen to those 16.4 million Americans? The budget doesn't say. It has no plan for providing that they will be able to have health insurance.

Taking away health insurance from 16.4 million Americans, many of whom have it for the first time in their lives, is no small issue. That number is a big number. Sometimes big numbers just sound like big numbers. Let me put it in context. How many Americans are 16.4 million people? Well, 16.4 million people with health insurance is the entire combined population of Wyoming, the District of Columbia, Vermont, North Dakota, Alaska, South Dakota, Delaware, Montana, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Hawaii, Idaho, Nebraska, and West Virginia. That is 14 States and the District of Columbia. The entire combined population from birth to death in those 15 jurisdictions is what 16.4 million American people are. What this budget proposes is to reach in and strip away health insurance from every last one of those 16.4 million people without a proposal, without a plan, without even any indication of how we would tackle this problem.

I refuse to be a part of that. I refuse to contemplate voting for that. I have had too much experience with people who don't have health insurance to push willingly people back into the shadows when they have had health insurance for the first time in their life.

I know the Presiding Officer understands this. We all do. Health insurance is about two things. It is about health, but it is also about assurance. So if you are sick, if you are in an accident, if your wife is in an accident, if your kids are sick, you have to have this so that you can receive health care, so that you can receive treatment. But when you are not sick and when you haven't been in an accident, you still go to bed worrying about what will happen to your children if they get into an accident, what will happen to your wife if she gets ill. Even when you are healthy, the absence of health insurance imposes an anxiety—especially on parents—that is very, very severe.

So I will not be part of a budget that tells 16.4 million people—the combined population of 14 States and the District of Columbia—that while you may have had this health insurance for the first time in your life, we are now going to take it away from you without a plan to help you have the assurance and the peace of mind and the protection of your health that you have under existing law.

We should not step backward. We should always step forward. Can we find improvements? Of course we can. But we shouldn't step backward. That is why I voted against the budget in committee, and that is why I am likely, absent major change, to vote against it on the floor.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank Senator KAINE for his outstanding work on the committee and for his very cogent remarks.

In the Republican budget, we don't have to talk about protecting absurd loopholes for large corporations and for the wealthiest people in this country. We don't have to talk about significant cuts in Head Start, making it harder for working families to send their kids to that very important program. We don't have to talk about cuts in the Pell grant program, some $90 billion in mandatory funding, making it harder for working families to send their kids to college. We don't have to talk about raising taxes on working families by allowing the earned-income tax credit and the children's tax credit to expire. We don't even have to talk about that. All we have to do is to hear what Senator KAINE just said.

Does anybody in America think it makes sense to tell 16 million men, women, and children—who today have health insurance, some for the first time in their lives—that they are going to lose that health insurance, but, by the way, we will continue to collect the taxes from the Affordable Care Act?

Does anyone take that proposal seriously—throwing 16 million people off of health insurance, the equivalent of, what was it, the 15 smallest States in America—and having no plan with what to do with these people?

On the surface, I think the Republican budget makes no sense at all and has a very warped sense of priorities in terms of protecting the wealthiest people in this country—the largest corporations—but sticking it to the middle-class and working families.

Senator KAINE mentioned that one of the areas that we, in fact, are going to focus on is the need to create jobs. I think all of us who are not particularly partisan are aware of the fact that the economy today is a lot better than it was when President Bush left office and we were hemorrhaging 800,000 jobs a month. Is the economy where we would like it to be today? I don't think anyone believes that. But have we made some significant progress in the last 6, 6½ years? Yes, I think we have.

But having said that, let's be clear. If you look at the unemployment rates, unemployment in this country is not 5½ percent. Real unemployment is close to 11 percent. Youth unemployment, which we never talk about at all, is somewhere around 17 percent, and African-American youth unemployment is off the charts.

In addition to that, we have another major problem. That is, our infrastructure is crumbling. So what many of us think we should be doing is that at a time when our roads, bridges, rail systems, water plants, wastewater plants, dams, levees, and airports need a huge amount of work, and at a time when real unemployment is much higher than it should be—well, what about a commonsense approach which says: Let's start rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure and let us put Americans back to work?

Do you know what, that is what the American people want. On every poll I have seen, the top priority of the American people—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—is the economy, create jobs, raise wages, and that is what we should be doing.

In about 1 hour or so I will officially offer an amendment which will, in fact, rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and create many millions of decent-paying jobs.

In terms of infrastructure, which is a fancy word for roads, bridges, water systems, rail, and so forth, I don't think you have to be a Ph.D. in infrastructure to know our infrastructure is really in quite bad shape. Every day somebody gets into a car—whether it is in Vermont or Washington, DC—and you see that pothole that takes away half of your axle, that is what infrastructure is about.

When you are in a traffic jam because the road is inadequate to deal with traffic, that is called infrastructure.

When your water pipes in your town are bursting and flooding downtown, that is called infrastructure.

The truth is that for too many years Congress has dramatically underfunded the maintenance and improvement of the physical infrastructure our economy depends upon. That has to change, and that is why I will be introducing an amendment to invest $478 billion over 6 years to modernize our infrastructure.

How will we pay for that? Will we pay for it by throwing children off of Head Start? Will we pay for it by throwing people off of the Affordable Care Act? No. We are going to pay for it in the right way, and that is to close tax loopholes that allow corporations and billionaires to shift their profits to the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, and other tax havens. So instead of having these corporations putting their money in tax havens—paying zero in Federal income tax—and at a time when we are losing about $100 billion a year without reason, we are going to ask these corporations to start paying their fair share of taxes, and then we are going to use that money to repair our crumbling infrastructure and put millions of people back to work.

This amendment—by the way, I will tell you personally I have introduced legislation that is more expansive than this, but because I want all of the Members of the Senate to be supporting this, I have tailored it down a little bit, and we are talking about $478 billion over 6 years. This amendment will support more than 9 million good-paying jobs over 6 years, more than 1.5 million jobs a year. This is money that not only creates jobs and rebuilds our infrastructure, it makes the country more productive, more efficient, and safer.

Right now, Larry Summers, the former Treasury Secretary, makes the point that if we take into account the impact of depreciation, our net investment in infrastructure is actually closer to zero of GDP, zero percent. In other words, what we are spending our money on is not rebuilding new infrastructure but replacing and patching old infrastructure.

The sad truth is that as a nation we are falling further and further behind. Throughout China, multibillion-dollar projects are underway to build new bridges, airports, tunnels, an $80 billion water project, and high-speed rail lines—in China, not in the United States.

This past November, China approved nearly $115 billion for 21 additional major infrastructure projects. While we are debating, while we refuse to invest in our crumbling infrastructure, China is doing just that—in spades.

It is no surprise that the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report now ranks our overall infrastructure at 12th in the world—12th in the world. That is down from seventh place a decade ago. There was once a time when the United States had an infrastructure that was the envy of the world. Now we are in 12th place.

Let's take a look at some of the problems we face and why we need to invest in infrastructure.

One out of every nine bridges in this country is structurally deficient, and nearly one-quarter are functionally obsolete. We need to rebuild crumbling bridges.

Almost one-third of our roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and nearly 42 percent of all urban highways are congested. We need to rebuild crumbling roads.

Transit systems across the country are struggling to address deferred maintenance, even as ridership steadily increases. People want to take advantage of transit, to get to work on transit, and yet the transit authorities are deferring maintenance because of limited funds.

Meanwhile, nearly 45 percent of American households lack any meaningful access to transit, which is a huge problem in rural areas across the country, including the State of Vermont. In Vermont, in most cases you have one way to get to work and only one way: That is in your automobile.

The amendment I would be offering also creates a national infrastructure bank. This idea, championed in the past by Senators on both sides of the aisle, will leverage private capital to finance more than $250 billion in transportation, energy, environmental, and telecommunications projects.

My amendment will also greatly expand credit assistance to projects of national and regional significance through the TIFIA Program, long championed by my good friend from California, Senator BARBARA BOXER.

It will boost funding for the highly competitive TIGER Program that funds locally sponsored transportation projects across the country that increase economic competitiveness and promote economic innovations.

But we all know our infrastructure problems are not just limited to roads, bridges, and transit. Much of our Nation's rail system is obsolete, even though our energy-efficient railroads move more freight than ever and Amtrak's ridership has never been higher.

While we debate the merits of high-speed rail in Congress, countries across Europe and Asia have gone ahead and built vast high-speed networks. Guess what. They work. High-speed rail trains relieve congestion on roads, airports, and whisk people around quickly and efficiently.

China has already 12,000 miles of track with trains that run at least 125 miles per hour and several thousand miles with trains that can travel at 200 miles per hour. Meanwhile, the Acela, Amtrak's fastest train, travels at an average speed of just 65 miles per hour.

This amendment will invest $12 billion to make much-needed investments to upgrade our passenger and freight rail lines, and to move people and goods more quickly and efficiently.

It is time for America to catch up with the rest of the world. There was once a time when we were No. 1 in infrastructure. Today we are No. 12.

I hear my friends on the other side talking about the debt we are going to be leaving our kids and our grandchildren, while we are going to be leaving them a crumbling infrastructure which at some point somebody is going to have to pay for unless we get our act together now.

America's airports are bursting at the seams as the number of passengers and cargo grows. The Airports Council International—North America says America needs $76 billion over the next 5 years to accommodate growth in passengers and cargo activity and to rehabilitate existing facilities.

Moreover, and rather incredibly, our airports still rely on antiquated 1960s radar technology because Congress chronically underfunds deployment of a new satellite-based air traffic control system.

This amendment will invest $6 billion to improve airports across the country. It will invest another $6 billion to bring our air traffic control system into the 21st century by accelerating deployment of NextGen technology that will make our skies safer and our airports more efficient. Anyone, as many of us do, who travels, who flies a lot, knows our airports need to be more efficient than they are.

Bottlenecks at our marine seaports, which handle 95 percent of all overseas imports and exports, cause delays that prevent goods from getting to their destinations on time. The same is true—perhaps even more so—for our inland waterways, which carry the equivalent of 50 million truck trips of goods each year.

My amendment will invest an additional $1 billion a year to clear the backlog of projects needed to improve inland waterways, coastal harbors, and shipping channels. Our businesses simply can't compete in the global economy if they can't move their goods and supplies to, from, and within our country more efficiently.

Right now, more than 4,000 of the Nation's 84,000 dams are considered deficient—not in need of a few repairs, but deficient—serious problems.

Even worse, one of every 11 levees has been rated as likely to fail during a major flood. I will talk a little more about this issue in a few minutes as this is something that could concern everyone in the Senate.

My amendment will invest $5 billion a year to repair and improve the high hazard dams that provide flood control, drinking water, irrigation, hydropower, and recreation across the country, and the flood levees that protect our cities and our farms.

Much of our drinking water infrastructure is nearing the end of its useful life. I like to tell the story of Rutland, VT. A few years ago that city—one of the largest in Vermont—had water pipes that were built before the Civil War—before the Civil War—and I think that is not all that uncommon. Cities and towns all over this country, in many instances, have pipes that go way, way, way back and are constantly breaking and causing serious leaks.

Each year, there are nearly one-quarter million water main breaks with the loss of 7 billion gallons of freshwater. Let me repeat that: Each year, there are nearly one-quarter million water main breaks with the loss of 7 billion gallons of freshwater. But that is nothing compared to the amount of water we lose through leaky pipes and faulty meters. In all, the American Water Works Association estimates that we lose 2.1 trillion gallons of treated drinking water every year—2.1 trillion gallons. Clearly, this is an issue that cannot continue to be delayed. We have to address that.

Our wastewater treatment plants aren't in much better shape than our freshwater pipes are. Almost 10 billion gallons of raw sewage is dumped into our Nation's waterways every year when plants fail or pipes burst, often during heavy rains. My amendment would invest $2 billion a year so States can improve the drinking water systems that provide Americans with clean, safe water.

The amendment would similarly invest $2 billion a year to improve the wastewater and storm water infrastructure that protects water quality in our Nation's rivers and lakes.

America's aging electrical grid consists of a patchwork system of interconnected power generation transmission and distribution facilities, some of which date back to the early 1900s. Not surprisingly, the grid suffers from hundreds of major power failures every year, many of which are avoidable. Our grid is simply not up to the 21st century challenges it faces, including resiliency to cyber attacks. It is no wonder the World Economic Forum ranks our electric grid at just 24th in the world, in terms of reliability, just behind Barbados.

My amendment will invest $3 billion a year for power transmission and distribution modernization projects to improve the reliability and resiliency of our ever more complex electric power grid. This investment will also position our grid to accept new sources of locally generated renewable energy and will address critical vulnerabilities to cyber attacks, an issue of great concern to many of us.

Another area where we are falling behind is Internet access and speed, and this is especially important to rural States such as Vermont. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the OECD, ranks the United States 16th in the world in terms of broadband access—16th in the world in terms of broadband success—not something we should be terribly proud of. We are only marginally better in terms of average broadband speed—12th in the world, according to Akamai's 2014 annual report.

How can it be that businesses, schools and families in Bucharest, Romania, have access to much faster Internet than most of the United States of America?

My amendment will invest $2 billion a year to expand high-speed broadband networks in underserved and unserved areas and to boost speeds and capacity all across this country. Let us be clear: Internet access is no longer a luxury, it is essential for 21st century commerce, for education, for telemedicine, and for public safety. We cannot continue to lag behind many of our global competitors in terms of broadband quality and access.

That is a brief summary of what my amendment does. It addresses a chronic funding shortfall. It addresses the need to start the kinds of investments we need to bring our physical infrastructure into the 21st century. If $478 billion over 6 years sounds like a lot of money, please consider this: The American Society of Civil Engineers—the people who actually know the most about the state of America's infrastructure—says we need to invest $3.6 trillion by 2020 just to get our Nation's infrastructure to a state of good repairs. So this amendment is a good start, but that is all it is. It is a good start. Much more has to be done.

Let me conclude by asking my fellow Americans to imagine an America where millions of people in our 50 States are hard at work earning good wages rebuilding our crumbling bridges, making our roads much better, dealing with wastewater plants, dealing with water systems, and dealing with our rail system. Think about what America looks like when we create an infrastructure that is 21st century.

Our job right now is to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. As a former mayor, I can absolutely assure you infrastructure does not get better all by itself. You can't turn around and ignore it and think it gets better. Quite the contrary, it gets worse. If you have a bridge right now which is in serious disrepair, it does not get better by ignoring it. It only gets worse, and in fact it ends up costing more money to rebuild it as it deteriorates.

So we have an opportunity right now. We have an opportunity to make our country more efficient, more productive, and safer by creating a 21st century infrastructure, and at the same time we have an opportunity to create millions of decent-paying jobs. In many respects, this is a no-brainer. This amendment is paid for by ending outrageous corporate loopholes that allow large profitable corporations from paying any Federal income tax. So I hope we will have wide bipartisan support for this amendment, which, as I understand it, will be voted on tomorrow, and I will officially bring it up in about half an hour.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I am going to talk about the fifth annual celebration of Congress Week, sponsored by the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress. It is a national commemoration which coincides with the week in which Congress achieved its first quorums in the year 1789.

Before I do so, let me make a couple of observations on other items of business in front of the Senate. First of all, we are about to embark on the annual process of adopting a budget. This Senator had the privilege as a young Congressman in my first year in the House of being assigned to the House Budget Committee. That was not long after the whole apparatus of the Budget Committees were set up requiring Congress to adopt an annual budget. The original reason for requiring it, and requiring a process called reconciliation, was so a majority vote—instead of what used to be the Senate cutting off debate at two-thirds, now it is 60 votes to cut off debate—would be required to pass a budget because of the tough decisions that needed to be made in lowering a deficit by cutting spending and raising tax revenue.

But along come the administrations in the early part of the last decade, and they reversed the process, using reconciliation not to require the hard votes for Senators and House Members in raising tax revenue but to do exactly the opposite with a majority vote, instead of having to reach the 60-vote threshold to cut off debate in the Senate.

So as the decade started, after the administration in 2000 transferred over to the new administration in 2001, with a healthy surplus, lo and behold the budget, in the course of the next almost decade, went completely out of whack. Instead of revenues being up and spending being here on a bar graph—the difference being the surplus of more coming in each year—it went in exactly the opposite direction. The tax revenues fell off so significantly because of the tax policies adopted through that budgetary reconciliation process in about the year 2001. The tax revenues fell off, the spending increased, and we went to huge annual deficits.

I don't know what the majority is going to try to use reconciliation for this time, but this Senator is looking for balance and common sense and taking care of the needs that government needs to provide—provide for the national security; provide for those who are the least fortunate among us; provide for what a society with a big heart like in America, reflected by the people who are elected in its representative government—to reflect the American people with a big heart and to keep our fiscal house in order.

So as we start this process, I think we ought to be listening to Senator SANDERS, the ranking member of the Budget Committee. We ought to be listening to the members of the Budget Committee. I have served on that committee up through this last Congress for 14 years. It is an important process, and it can be effective if it is not misused. That process was misused when it took us from a position of huge surpluses in the 1990s, up through 2000, to exactly the opposite, huge annual deficits.

AIRPORT SECURITY

Madam President, I wish to mention another item I had occasion to be involved in over the weekend. If we go back to the latter part of last year, there was a 6-month period—if you can believe this—that guns were being smuggled onto commercial aircraft flying from Atlanta Hartsfield to New York City, where they were then sold on the streets in Brooklyn.

We might say: Well, if this criminal ring is selling guns in a State that does not allow the possession of guns—New York—why wouldn't they just run them up I–95 in a car or a truck? Because law enforcement was on to that. So they devised this ingenious scheme where instead they were bringing the guns into the passenger cabin of a commercial airliner—not once but over a 6-month period—and hundreds of guns were transported right in the passenger cabin.

Here is how the scheme worked: One perpetrator would go through TSA security with an empty knapsack, a backpack. Another perpetrator would go through security—because there was not an actual check of whether that airport employee at the Atlanta airport in fact had any contraband, he could get into the area underneath the aircraft, go up into the secure area for passengers, go into the men's room, and transfer the guns to the fellow with the empty backpack who had already come through security with TSA. They transferred—if you can believe it—an AK–47. At the time they finally picked up this fellow in December of last year, he had 16 handguns in his backpack.

Naturally, in our responsibility and as the ranking member of the commerce committee, I wanted to get into this. What I found is that they weren't doing those secure checks—like we do when we go through TSA as a passenger—in the perimeter of the airport for the thousands of employees who work at the airport. That is how they got the guns in and then did this scheme of transferring the guns. It is a good thing the perpetrator was a criminal, not a terrorist, because we can imagine what it would be like had he been a terrorist.

So what are the airports going to do about it? I would suggest they ought to take a look at the Orlando airport and also the Miami airport. This Senator visited the Orlando airport over the weekend. They took hundreds of entry points at the airport for their employees and boiled them down to a handful—specifically, 7 entry points for about 6,000 employees at the Orlando airport. They put up the metal detection devices, the conveyer belt that takes backpacks through the machine, that looks at their backpacks to see if there is any contraband, et cetera. So it was not financially prohibitive when they boiled down the number of entry points for their employees to a manageable number. A similar thing was done at the Miami airport.

As a result, it has at first blush the appearance that this is a way of solving the problem. Now, sooner or later, if this kind of scheme happens in another airport, it is going to be absolutely unacceptable and intolerable as to what happened in the Atlanta airport.

The question is, What about employees losing their badges and somebody grabbing the badge and utilizing it? Well, at these screening points, they swipe their badge, but the officers in that reduced number of entry points for airport employees are checking the badge, looking at the picture on the badge and the person with the badge, and then having the holder of the badge go over and enter a personal identification number—a PIN number—as another safeguard before going into the secure area of the airport.

We are going to have to do this. There is no excuse for what happened in Atlanta.

CONGRESS WEEK

Madam President, now I would like to speak about this great fifth annual celebration of Congress Week, and it goes back to when Congress first started in 1789, the very first quorums this Congress had. The birth of the Congress was not on a single day or an event, but it was a process of deliberation in the Federal Government that met in the spring and summer of 1787. They hashed out the Constitution, which provided for Congress to convene on March 4, 1789. On that date in New York City, which was the temporary capital at the time, the first meeting place of the Congress, cannons fired and church bells rang to announce the birth of the new Congress, but only a few Members of Congress had arrived by that date. Weeks passed before the House achieved its first quorum on April 1, with the Senate not getting a quorum until 5 days later on April 6. The House and Senate met jointly on April 6 in the Senate Chamber to count the ballots of the Presidential electors.

So Congress Week's theme, ''The People's Branch,'' reflects and emphasizes that Congress is the part of the government designed to be closest to the people and the most likely to reflect the sentiment of the people—because it is those of us in the Halls of the House and the Senate who go back home and are directly reflective and responsible to our constituencies.

We try to keep historical records of all of this. Our congressional papers are some of the richest sources for the study of national affairs, local history, regional issues, and, of course, for American history. They document the legislative branch, and they document the history and foreign affairs of the country. It is imperative that we manage and preserve our own papers for future historical research and study of democracy.

The Association of Centers for the Study of Congress, founded in 2003, is an independent, nonpartisan alliance of more than 40 organizations and institutions that preserve the papers of Members of Congress and promote a wide range of programs and research opportunities related to Congress. James Madison said that an informed citizenry was the best guarantee that this Nation's great experiment in representative democracy would work and survive for future generations.

So I want to call Congress Week to the attention of the Senate and to the Nation's public—awareness of the rich and colorful history of representative democracy through the institution of the United States Congress. I encourage our colleagues to preserve their records and the history of the individuals who make up this great institution.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Michigan, Ms. STABENOW.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, first I thank the distinguished Senator from Vermont for his advocacy, passion, and hard work in laying out what this is all about.

I also appreciate the work of the distinguished chair, even though we have disagreements on the budget, because this is really an opportunity we have to create a serious budget—a serious budget that gives every American a fair shot to work hard and to get ahead and the opportunity to strengthen the middle class of our country. But that is not what is happening here.

What America needs is a middle-class budget. Unfortunately, instead, what we have is a budget that continues to rig the system on behalf of the wealthy and the well-connected. This budget does not close corporate tax loopholes or end practices such as inversions that take our jobs overseas. It doesn't even address the folks who pack up and leave the country and let taxpayers and workers pay the tab for the move.

This budget does not help us address our crumbling infrastructure, which is a burden on our workers and a drag on the economy. Frankly, if we address that, as our ranking Member has urged, we will create a lot of good-paying jobs, millions of middle-class jobs.

This budget does not invest in a meaningful way in education and opportunity for the future, which is the key to equipping our workers to excel in the global economy we all face, nor does it help make college tuition more affordable or help the millions of Americans who are struggling to pay back college loans. Too many young people today, too many young professionals come out of college and get a job and have loans that are more than a mortgage would be. They can't afford to even buy a house as a result of it. This budget needs to address that.

This budget does nothing to address what is happening in terms of wages for tens of millions of Americans who are working hard every day trying to hold it together. It does not raise the minimum wage, nor does it help the millions of working women who are living in poverty. By the way, half of the women living in poverty could be lifted out of poverty if we really had equal pay for equal work. That is stunning. We could address that in this budget resolution.

This budget does not protect our seniors who have worked hard to earn the security that comes from Medicare and Social Security. We are talking about a situation where the House, in fact, outrageously is suggesting doing away with the Affordable Care Act that has a group of exchanges through which insurance companies have to compete to lower prices—a whole process of the Affordable Care Act that they want to eliminate. At the same time, they are proposing to put the same thing in place for Medicare—take away the universal structure of Medicare and create a situation that will be unstable and more costly for millions of seniors.

Finally, this budget calls for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, but it does some very interesting things. First of all, it would take health care coverage, medical care, away from 16.4 million families and raise taxes on millions of middle-class families right now. At the same time they are taking away medical care, health coverage, they turn around and exclude the Affordable Care Act from the process of points of order that are in this bill that say if there is a point of order—there can be a point of order against anything that increases the deficit except for the Affordable Care Act. We are going to exclude that. Why? Because the Affordable Care Act actually reduces the deficit, and they admit it in the resolution because they exclude that from points of order.

So we have a very interesting situation where, on the one hand, this budget takes away medical care, health care, extra help with closing what is called the doughnut hole for our seniors under medical, all the provisions, all the protections for people who already have insurance who now can't get dropped if they get sick and if they are sick can get insurance even if they have a preexisting condition, all of the folks who have their children on their insurance up to age 26, all of the other protections—gone under this budget. However, they admit that to do that actually increases the deficit, so they exempt the Affordable Care Act from that provision.

On top of that, we are talking about millions of Americans who would have increased costs. So people are going to get increased costs, increased taxes, increased deficit, and less medical care.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The Senator has used 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. I ask if I may have 1 more minute.

Mr. SANDERS. The Senator may have 2 more minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank my colleague and leader of the Budget Committee.

We are in this crazy situation where this bill would eliminate health care for 16.4 million Americans right now, most of whom have not had the ability to find affordable health care. It would raise their cost, raise their taxes, raise the deficit, and then at the same time this bill keeps the revenue and the cost savings from the Affordable Care Act. This is a pretty nifty trick, I have to tell you. So you lose your health care, but the revenue that is generated to pay for health services stays in the baseline. They are counting the revenue, they are counting the cost savings in this budget. They are counting the savings and taking away your health care. Not a good deal. I would suggest that is a very, very bad deal.

This is not honest budgeting. It certainly is not a budget that puts middle-class families first or those who are working very hard—one job, two jobs, three jobs—trying to lift themselves up to get into the middle class for themselves and their families.

It is not just irresponsible budgeting; it is irresponsible governing to create a document that hurts so many people in the priorities that are set—low-income people, middle-income people, those struggling hard and working hard to get into the middle class—but protects the interests of privileged Americans. This is a budget rigged for the wealthy and well-connected of the country, and I would urge a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank Senator STABENOW not only for her remarks this evening but for the great work she has done on the Budget Committee, and I certainly concur with the thrust of what she is saying. Our middle class is struggling, and the wealthiest people are doing phenomenally well. Corporations are enjoying recordbreaking profits. CEOs make 270 times more than their average worker.

We don't need a budget that protects the top one-tenth of 1 percent and the CEOs of major corporations. We need a budget that protects working families and the middle class. I know that is something Senator STABENOW has been fighting for throughout this entire process, and I thank the Senator very much for that.

AMENDMENT NO. 323

(Purpose: To create millions of middle class jobs by investing in our nation's infrastructure paid for by raising revenue through closing loopholes in the corporate and international tax system)

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 323, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], for himself and Mr. WYDEN, proposes an amendment numbered 323.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me just reiterate what I said a moment ago. The wealthiest people in this country are doing phenomenally well. Ninety-nine percent of all new income created in America today is going to the top 1 percent. Those people are doing great. They don't need the help of the Senate. They are doing just fine. The top one-tenth of 1 percent own almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. Those people are doing extraordinarily well. They do not need the help of the Senate.

The people who do need the help are the working families and the middle class of this country, many of whom are working longer hours for lower wages. They, in fact, need our help. Seniors who are having to make the difficult choice of whether they heat their homes in the winter, buy the medicines they need, or buy the food they need, need our help. Young people in this country who would love to go to college but don't know how they can afford to go to college need our help. People graduating college with $50,000, $60,000, $100,000 of debt and don't know how to pay off that debt need our help.

We have to get our priorities right. We have to know whose side we are on.

The amendment I am offering, which I suspect will be voted on tomorrow, is very significant in that it addresses two major issues. At a time when real unemployment in this country is not 5.5 percent—if we count those who have given up looking for work—and I believe the Presiding Officer touched on that issue during her remarks—if we count those who have given up looking for work or those who are working part time when they want to work full time, real unemployment is 11 percent. We need to create millions of jobs. Youth unemployment is at 17 percent. African-American youth unemployment is off the charts. Right now, when we talk to people all over this country, they say: Help us. Create decent-paying jobs.

That is what this amendment does. This amendment creates 9 million decent-paying jobs over a 6-year period, and it does it in a very sensible way.

Mr. President, I think you know, I know, and every Member of this body knows and virtually every American knows our infrastructure is crumbling. Our roads, our bridges, our water systems, our wastewater plants, our levies, our dams, our airports, and our rail system are in need of significant improvements. We cannot be a first-rate economy when we have a third-rate infrastructure. Everybody knows that.

Let me be very clear. If we don't invest in infrastructure today, it is not going to get better all by itself. It will only deteriorate. We keep pushing it off, and we keep pushing it off, and the roads get worse, the bridges get worse, and the water systems get worse. Now is the time to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, and when we do that, we will create or maintain some 9 million good-paying jobs. I would hope that maybe once around here we can have bipartisan support for a piece of legislation that I believe in their hearts every Member of this body knows makes sense.

How are we going to pay for this? We are not going to pay for it by cutting Medicare. We are not going the pay for it by cutting Pell grants. We are not going to pay for it by cutting Head Start. We are not going to pay for it by asking low-income seniors to pay more for their prescription drugs. We are going to pay for it by an eminently fair way; that is, by undoing huge tax loopholes that enable large, profitable corporations in some cases to pay zero in Federal income taxes. It is time to end those loopholes. It is time to invest in our crumbling infrastructure. It is time to create millions of decent-paying jobs.

I would hope very much that we would have strong bipartisan support for this amendment.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, we have now had our first amendment offered, one to add more infrastructure. I doubt there is anybody in the Chamber—even when we are all here—who would doubt that we need to do things with infrastructure. My infrastructure time actually goes back to when I was elected mayor of Gillette, WY. It was a boom town. We didn't know how big it was going to increase. We knew we were already short of sewer, water, electricity, streets, sidewalks, not to mention police, garbage, and all the other things that come with it. The infrastructure was sorely lacking. In fact, one of the first calls I got was from a person who said: What are you going to do when your substation blows up? I had to ask what a substation was, and then I would have to ask why it would blow up. When it gets to 110 percent of capacity—or the first warm day—it ought to blow up. If that happened, the consequence of that was the people at Gillette would have been without electricity for about 6 weeks. I think in this day and age if a company went without electricity for 6 weeks, a person would be tarred and feathered. So I understand infrastructure and the need for it.

The Federal Government never once offered to do any infrastructure for me, and we didn't need them to either. But there are things the Federal Government has taken the responsibility for and that we need to make sure are funded and taken care of and repaired, and I am sure both sides of the aisle want to do that.

The title of this amendment sounds great, but when you get down into the details, there are some problems. The budget resolution has a deficit-neutral reserve fund for infrastructure and envisions that Congress will fully fund transportation priorities to strengthen our crumbling infrastructure with a new highway bill in May.

I have been here long enough to know we always do that. It is not very difficult to get the votes together to pass a highway bill. The difficulty, of course, is coming up with the money, but there is a deficit-neutral reserve fund established to allow the flexibility to get that to happen. It provides a mechanism so a bill can move. It allows authorizers to find new revenue or offsets to extend the life of the highway trust fund.

The Senate budget resolution strives to maintain a well-functioning national transportation system, a core element of the U.S. economy, which helps hard-working Americans while reducing lower priority items that do not contribute to a national transportation network and should be handled in a local way.

Our Nation's system of roads and bridges has deteriorated and is in desperate need of repair. Everyone here is fired up about the issue because we have all experienced these infrastructure deficiencies. We have seen bridges collapse. We have seen some of the deterioration of the roads. We have all been frustrated with traffic, bottlenecks and potholes.

Today, there are more than 1 million miles of roads eligible for Federal aid and more than 60,000 bridges are structurally deficient. However, the highway trust fund is bankrupt. Each year trust fund spending outpaces the revenues from the gas tax by about $14 billion and that gap is growing. To compensate for funding shortfalls, the trust fund has required large transfers totaling $65 billion since 2008, $62 billion of which came from the general fund of the Treasury. We didn't use to have to do that. Usually the gas tax provided a big enough fund that we were able to increase the number of dollars spent on infrastructure.

When the Bowles-Simpson group met, their suggestion was that the gas tax—the user fee for cars using the highways—needed to be raised a nickel a gallon for each of three consecutive years. Unfortunately, that was about 5 years ago, and they predicted the money would run out before now if we didn't make that kind of a raise. There have been several things that have been proposed, but we never had a vote on any of them.

A one-time cash infusion from a corporate tax increase does not do anything to take care of the discrepancy between spending and revenues that results in the highway trust fund insolvency. We do need a long-term highway trust fund solution rather than another short-term fix that kicks the can down the road. A corporate tax increase is not a long-term solution for the problems of the highway trust fund.

I have been interested in the international tax piece, and that is the part the President hung his hat on for the infrastructure piece. The way that works is to mandate a 14-percent tax on all of the money that is overseas. I didn't really see any clause in there that allowed that to be paid over any kind of a period of time. We didn't need all of that revenue right in the first year.

I did an international tax piece that had a much lower repatriation fee on it and it was not mandatory. The difficulty of making it not mandatory is it doesn't score so it does not show any money coming back because nobody has to bring it back. They have to declare everything upfront and agree to pay the tax over a period of 5 years if they were going to bring it back. There would be 5 years of revenue from this repatriation of funds, even at a lower rate, which could fund what we are talking about here, or it could fund the other needs that have to be done in tax reform.

The way the budget is written, that is left up to the individual committees to come up with the solutions they need. It is not up to us here on the floor doing a budget where we have a mixture of people from all of the committees, but not the kind of structure we have in the specific committees to come up with the final solution for it. There has to be a solution, and I know it can be made, but it can't be done so that it bankrupts the companies. If we take the tax that is overseas and impose a 14-percent tax on it that has to be paid this year, we will bankrupt almost every company that is out there, and the reason is they don't just have that money sitting over there; it is being used over there. They have to be able to sell off or reclaim whatever money they have in order to be able to pay any taxes on the money they have overseas. And that needs to be done, because if we can find a way for companies to bring their money back to the United States, they will invest it in the United States and it will grow the economy and we will have more jobs.

Incidentally, the best way to take care of most of these problems is to grow the economy, which is the opposite of what this administration is doing. It fascinated me that in the President's budget he said if we could grow the economy by just 1 percent, it would result in $4 trillion in taxes. But everything I saw in there were ways to change that back so we didn't grow the economy the 1 percent to raise $4 trillion.

I had the Congressional Budget Office look at it, and they said a 1-percent increase in the economy would raise $3 trillion, so we have a small deficit difference, but that is a lot of money any way you look at it, whether it is the CBO's estimate or the President's estimate.

Some of Senator SANDERS' tax reform ideas have merit, but it should be dealt with within the context of the comprehensive tax reform and the highway bill. These tax policies have nothing to do with infrastructure and will force transportation spending even further away from the user-pays principle we have always had until recently when we started tapping some of the other trust funds.

The U.S. tax code is overly complicated, inefficient, and archaic. I think we all agree it needs to be fixed, and I believe Senator HATCH and Senator WYDEN are on a path to do that. Both have taken a look at it very extensively and have been working on it for quite a while. Senator HATCH was working on it with Senator Baucus before Senator WYDEN became the chairman. I think the two of them are still working on it, and that is how it needs to be done. It is complicated, it is inefficient, it is archaic, it is too big, and it is not fair.

The current structure hurts economic growth, it frustrates working Americans, and it pushes American businesses overseas. Any discussion of international or corporate tax reform should be dealt with in the context of a comprehensive tax reform to simplify the entire system. We should not drag tax reform into the highway funding debate. One of the tendencies we have around here is to come up with some very simple solutions that, as a solution, sound like a really good idea, but when we get into the details, there are a whole bunch of complexities that result in unintended consequences that can foul up the whole system, and that is one of the things that something as complex as our tax system can do if we try to write that as a budget resolution.

The budget resolution assumes the tax-writing committees will adopt a tax reform proposal that reduces marginal rates but broadens the tax base to create a fairer, efficient, competitive, progrowth tax regime that is revenue neutral, and I look forward to their work. I am on that committee so I will get to be a part of that work. One of the areas I am particularly interested in is, of course, small business.

I was in small business for a long time. My wife and I had shoe stores. If you have a small business corporation, you pay the taxes on the money you make in that given year, even though you still need to keep it invested in the business if you are going to keep the business going. Those are called the passthrough businesses, so we have to be careful that when we fix the corporate tax structure, we don't ruin the small business tax structure at the same time. That is a major complication, but when you get into the details of that, it gets even more complicated.

I am hoping we do both corporate and individual at the same time. I have listened to Senator SANDERS talk about and mention a number of corporations that didn't pay taxes and even got some money back, and my first reaction to that is that is terrible; it should not happen in America. But after I looked at it, I thought if they had really violated the law, they would be in jail. They didn't violate the law. They used the tax laws we have now, which shows why we need to have tax reform.

I am in favor of tax reform and eliminating loopholes. I had an opportunity to look at a number of the tax expenditures. I know some of the businesses that were listed as tax expenditures actually wound up getting a different name for the same thing they get to write off that every other business gets to write off, and so we have to be careful that when we eliminate those that we are not moving into another category because one of the tax breaks I looked at, if we eliminated it, it would allow them to write their expenses off much faster than how they agreed to write them off. So it is more complicated than it seems on the surface.

I am hoping we can eliminate some of that complication and eliminate some of those loopholes. I hope we can use some of the money for infrastructure and the rest for the simplification and fairness of it. Fairness is very important, and that is why we have the committee structures the way we do too so we can have people looking at the issues from both sides to make sure there is fairness in the eyes of as many people as possible. When we start tinkering with the tax code in very small ways, that is how we wind up with these unfairness issues that appear in there. Helping out one sector can sometimes be adverse to another sector, but we don't realize it until the actual action takes place.

I am looking forward to the debate on infrastructure. It is my understanding we will vote on that sometime tomorrow around noon and that gives us an opportunity to have more debate on it.

In the meantime, I think we can probably come up with some commonsense solutions that could be worked through the committee, which was what was always envisioned in our budget.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of the time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF WILLIAM P. DOYLE TO BE A FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSIONER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of William P. Doyle, of Pennsylvania, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2018.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of William P. Doyle, of Pennsylvania, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2018?

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 89, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 77 Ex.]

YEAS—89

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Ayotte	Fischer	Murray
Baldwin	Flake	Nelson
Barrasso	Franken	Paul
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Peters
Blunt	Graham	Reed
Booker	Grassley	Reid
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Boxer	Heinrich	Rounds
Brown	Heitkamp	Rubio
Burr	Heller	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Sasse
Capito	Hoeven	Schatz
Cardin	Inhofe	Schumer
Carper	Isakson	Scott
Casey	Johnson	Sessions
Cassidy	Kaine	Shaheen
Coats	King	Shelby
Cochran	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Corker	Markey	Tillis
Cornyn	McCaskill	Udall
Cotton	McConnell	Warner
Daines	Menendez	Warren
Donnelly	Merkley	Whitehouse
Durbin	Mikulski	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Wyden
Ernst	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—11

Crapo	Manchin	Sullivan
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Kirk	Portman	Vitter
Lee	Risch	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, Sanders amendment No. 323 is pending, and Senators should expect a vote in relation to that amendment at 12 noon tomorrow, with at least one additional rollcall vote in the stack before lunch.

I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of S. Con. Res. 11 tomorrow morning, there be 38 hours of debate time remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Carolina.

ISRAEL

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I raise an issue before the body. I don't know how accurate the press reports are, but apparently the Chief of Staff of President Obama, Mr. McDonough, today spoke in town to a group called J Street, which is an organization supportive of the United States-Israel relationship, apparently. Here is what he allegedly said. He basically said that an occupation that has lasted more than 50 years must end.

So the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States, speaking in Washington today, called the Israeli presence in the West Bank an occupation. The Chief of Staff of the President of the United States is looking at a world completely different than the one I am viewing.

I ask Mr. McDonough and President Obama: Don't you realize the last time Israel withdrew in the Mideast—a Palestinian-controlled territory—was the withdrawal from Gaza and that when Israel voluntarily left Gaza, Hamas took over Gaza?

They are a terrorist organization and they fired up to 10,000 rockets from Gaza into Israel. Today, Israel has a presence in the West Bank. Today, Israel is surrounded by radical Islamists, unlike at any time I can remember.

The language used by the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States is exactly what Hamas uses. So now our administration is taking up the language of a terrorist organization to describe our friends in Israel.

Here is a question to the American people: Would you withdraw from the West Bank, given the situation that exists today on the ground between the Israelis and the rest of the region? Would you at this moment in Israel's history completely withdraw from the West Bank, given the experience in Gaza?

Does anybody on the left think that is a good idea? Does anybody in Israeli politics agree with the characterization of the Chief of Staff of President Obama? Does Mr. Herzog or anyone else in opposition to Prime Minister Netanyahu agree with this characterization? Is your country occupying the West Bank or are you there to make sure the West Bank doesn't turn into Gaza?

I talked with the Prime Minister Saturday and I congratulated him on a decisive victory and I look forward to working with him. He told me very clearly that he believes a two-state solution is not possible as long as the Palestinian Authority embraces Hamas, which controls the Gaza strip and is a terrorist organization by any reasonable definition.

With whom do you make peace, Mr. President? What kind of deal can you make when almost half the Palestinian people are in the hands of a terrorist organization who vow to destroy you every day? What kind of deal is that?

So do I want a two-state solution? Yes, I would like a two-state solution, where the Palestinians recognize the right of Israel to exist and they have the ability to chart their own destiny. They are not anywhere near there. The Palestinian community is broken into two parts. The Hamas terrorist organization controls the essential part of the Palestinian community. They will not recognize Israel's right to exist. They are using the territory they hold as a launching pad for attacks against Israel routinely. These are the people who launch rockets from schoolyards and apartment buildings trying to blame Israel for being the bad guy when they respond.

All I can say is when I thought it couldn't get worse, it has. When I thought we couldn't reach a new low in terms of this White House's view of the Mideast, we found a way to reach a new low. Today, the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States used language to describe Israel that has been reserved for terrorist organizations up until now.

So, Mr. McDonough, President Obama, you are completely delusional about the world as it is. You are negotiating with an Iranian regime, and in the President's New Year's greeting he called on the Iranian people to speak out in support of a nuclear deal. Mr. President, don't you understand that in Iran you can't speak out; that if you do speak out and petition your government you can get shot or put in jail? You don't understand that? You are talking to people as if they have a voice. You are talking about the regime as if they are some kind of rational actor.

In that same New Year's greeting, the President complimented the regime, headed up by the Ayatollahs, as being cooperative in terms of their nuclear negotiations with the P5+1. What the President didn't mention is that this very regime that is spreading terror, unlike at any time in recent memory, is involved in the toppling of four Arab capitals. They are wreaking havoc on the neighborhood. As we are negotiating on their nuclear deal, they are still the largest state sponsor of terrorism. They called for death to America 2 days ago.

So I say to the Obama administration: Wake up and change your policies before you set the whole world on fire. Please watch your language because our best ally in the region, the State of Israel, does not deserve the label of ''occupier,'' given the facts on the ground, and they do not deserve to hear from the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States language that is usually reserved for a terrorist organization.

So when I thought it couldn't get any worse, it has. Let me put the Obama administration on notice. You may not like the fact that Prime Minister Netanyahu won, but he did, and here is what you need to understand. If you are recalculating the administration's support for Israel in terms of how you handle resolutions in the United Nations, you need to understand that Congress will recalculate how we relate to the United Nations if you stand on the sidelines and let the U.N. take over the peace process.

There will be a bipartisan, violent backlash in this body if the Obama administration does not veto a U.N. resolution defining the peace process in the Security Council, avoiding direct negotiations between the parties. I am here to say that one of the casualties of a haphazard foreign policy could be the relationship between the United Nations and the Congress. I promise there is bipartisan support in this body for two things: to stand firmly with Israel and not to allow the U.N. Security Council to take over the peace process in defining the terms of a deal.

Secondly, if there is a deal with the Iranians over their nuclear program, if this administration takes that deal to the U.N. Security Council, bypassing Congress and not coming to us first, there will become a great backlash regarding that move.

So I say to the Obama administration: Israel is not the problem. The Israeli people have not killed one American soldier. The Israeli people are in a dispute about their survival with the Palestinian people. The Israeli people gave land to the Palestinians, and in return they got 10,000 rockets, and you want them to do it again. Can't you understand why Israel may not want to withdraw from the West Bank given the history of Gaza? If you can't, you are completely blind to the world as it is, and your hatred and your disgust and your disdain for the Prime Minister has clouded your judgment.

So to our friends in Israel I say: There can only be one Commander in Chief, and that is the way it should be. But there are 535 of us in the House and the Senate and we do have your back. We will not sit on the sidelines and watch this rhetoric enacted in a manner that would put you at risk beyond what you already are in terms of risk.

This is a low point for me; that an administration, the Chief of Staff of an American President, would use this language, but it fits into an overall pattern that I think is very destructive. So I say to President Obama and Mr. McDonough: Your foreign policy is not working. If you don't get that, then God help us all because what you are doing in the Mideast is not working. You are making everything worse, and now you have added fuel to the fire.

I hope there will be some self-correction at the White House; that we will not take this rhetoric any further than we have today; that there will be a reevaluation of whether it is appropriate to call the Israeli people occupiers, given the facts on the ground. Only time will tell.

I do understand this, without any hesitation. There are many of us in this body who will not put up with this. We will push back. Israel has not killed one U.S. soldier. Israel hasn't toppled any of their neighbors. Israel doesn't chant ''Death to America.'' You may not like the outcome of the Israeli election, but it was up to the Israeli people to decide, and they have decided.

All of us got into this body the same way—people at home voted for us. Under our Constitution, we have an equal voice to that of the President in terms of checks and balances. Even though he is the leader of America's foreign policy and the Commander in Chief, we do have the right to speak on such matters. So here is my voice, and I think I speak for many on both sides of the aisle when I say to the Israeli people: Do what you have to do to defend the Jewish State. To the President of the United States and Mr. McDonough: The language you used today is very unhelpful and, quite frankly, disconnected from reality.

I will end with this. Would any Member of this body, if they were in Israeli leadership, withdraw from the West Bank, given what is going on in the region? Would any Member of this body be as restrained in responding to a rocket attack coming from a neighbor as Israel has been restrained? What would we do if some terrorist organization next door to us launched a rocket trying to kill our children? Would we be as restrained as our Israeli friends? I doubt it.

I am asking this body to walk a mile in the shoes of the Israeli people and understand why this statement is so offensive and has usually been reserved by the leader of the free world to describe terrorist organizations.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mrs. ERNST pertaining to the introduction of S. 841 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR ERNST

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I congratulate the new Senator from Iowa, not only for her service in America's military for all of these years, but also for her service now in the Senate. She is obviously bringing to the Senate real expertise about the needs she addressed in her first piece of legislation. I expect it will enjoy broad bipartisan support, particularly with the sponsor having such firsthand knowledge of the needs of these returning veterans.

So on behalf of all Members of the Senate, I congratulate the Senator from Iowa for her new bill and for her first remarks.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Loretta Lynch, the nominee to be our next Attorney General, has now been awaiting a vote on the Senate floor for 25 days. I have spoken many times about her historic nomination, her inspiring family, and her passion for the highest callings of public service.

Last week, a distinguished group of bipartisan law enforcement officials came together to call for the confirmation of Loretta Lynch. These individuals have dedicated the better part of their careers to protecting the American people, and they conveyed how important it is to have the Senate confirm the chief law enforcement officer in the country.

One of those individuals is my friend, Louis Freeh, former Director of the FBI and a Federal judge. Director Freeh wrote to the committee in support of Loretta Lynch that ''[i]n my twenty-five years of public service—23 in the Department of Justice—I cannot think of a more qualified nominee to be America's chief law enforcement officer.'' He has further stated that ''Ms. Lynch is an atypically non-political appointment for that office, a career professional without any political party ties or activity.''

Loretta Lynch is also supported by the current New York police commissioner, who was appointed by a Democrat, and a former New York police commissioner, who was appointed by a Republican. She has earned the support of former U.S. attorneys from both Republican and Democratic administrations. She has the support of the Major

Cities Chiefs Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major County Sheriffs' Association, and many, many others.

There is a very obvious reason for the bipartisan support Ms. Lynch has received—her qualifications are simply beyond reproach. She has been confirmed by the Senate twice before to serve as the top Federal prosecutor based in Brooklyn, NY. Those who have worked with her over the course of her 30-year career described her as ''even-handed,'' ''apolitical,'' and believe she ''will be a strong independent voice at the helm of the Department of Justice.''

Under her leadership, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York has brought terrorists to justice, obtained convictions against both Republicans and Democrats in public corruption cases, and fought tirelessly against violent crime and financial fraud. Her record shows that as Attorney General, Ms. Lynch will effectively, fairly, and independently enforce the law.

Many Americans are starting to wonder why she is being held up so long in light of her sterling record and in light of the very serious law enforcement challenges that we face in communities across the country. Unfortunately, the Republican Senate leadership is holding Ms. Lynch's nomination hostage to their political agenda and that does not reflect well on the Senate or their leadership.

President Obama announced the nomination of Ms. Lynch more than 4 months ago. The Judiciary Committee reported her nomination with bipartisan support 25 days ago. As of today, her nomination has been pending on the Senate floor longer than all of the past seven Attorneys General combined: Richard Thornburgh, 1 day; Bob Barr, 5 days; Janet Reno, 1 day; John Ashcroft, 2 days; Alberto Gonzales, 8 days; Michael Mukasey, 2 days; and Eric Holder, 5 days. This delay is an embarrassment for the Senate.

The excuses for holding up her nomination continue to mount and each excuse rings hollow given the importance of the position to which she is nominated.

First, the President and Senate Democrats were warned last November that we should not move Ms. Lynch's nomination during the lameduck period last Congress. Senate Republicans claimed that she would be treated fairly if we waited. In fact, the current majority leader issued a statement last November, proclaiming that ''Ms. Lynch will receive fair consideration by the Senate. And her nomination should be considered in the new Congress through regular order.'' As a result, we acceded to their request. However, treatment of her nomination has not been fair when compared to her predecessors.

Despite Senate Republicans' request that we not move her nomination in the few weeks remaining in the lame-duck session, they now assert in the press that if this nomination was so important, then the President and Senate Democrats should have processed it during that very time of transition. Sometimes you can only shake your head at what is said to excuse their delay. This nomination is for the top law enforcement officer in the Nation. It should not just be important to Democrats. It should be important to Republicans as well. It is important to all Americans.

I can remember when Judge Mukasey was nominated by President Bush to be Attorney General. From the date of announcement to confirmation, it took 53 days. Judge Mukasey received a floor vote just 2 days after he was reported from committee. And these were some of the remarks made by Senate Republicans at that time: ''We should stop playing partisan political games with this nomination. The Justice Department is too important for this type of stuff.'' ''Forty days into the partisan wilderness is more than enough. We should confirm Judge Michael Mukasey without further delay.'' There were expressions of outrage against Democrats after just 40 days. Contrast that to Ms. Lynch, who has now been waiting 135 days. Her nomination has been pending on the floor for 25 days whereas Judge Mukasey received a vote in 2 days. Where is the outrage from my fellow Senators on the other side of the aisle now?

Second, the majority leader announced 2 weeks ago that he would finally schedule a vote on Ms. Lynch's nomination last week. However, instead of doing so, the majority leader changed his mind and acted as if the Senate could not consider legislation and executive nominees at the same time. Now he has announced that she will not have a confirmation vote until after the Senate has concluded its debate on the human trafficking bill. The Senate often debates legislation and votes on nominations at the same time. Over the last week and a half, we voted on six other executive nominations while we were on the human trafficking bill. None of those executive nominations is more important than this one. The top law enforcement officer in the land is not a negotiating chip that any party should use for leverage. That is not how we respect the role that law enforcement officials play in our system of government.

What made the delay announced last Sunday more confounding is the fact that Loretta Lynch has a proven track record of prosecuting human trafficking and child rape crimes. Over the course of the last decade, her office has indicted over 55 defendants in sex trafficking cases and rescued over 110 victims of sex trafficking.

Ms. Lynch and her office have used the tools that Congress has provided them to bring traffickers to justice. In United States v. Rivera, the prosecutors in her office utilized the Trafficking Victims Protection Act to help them obtain a conviction against an owner of several New York bars for his role in a sex trafficking and forced labor ring. The evidence at trial established that the defendants recruited and harbored scores of undocumented Latin American immigrants, and forced them to work as waitresses at the owner's bars. The owner and his accomplices used violence, including rapes and beatings, as well as fraud and threats of deportation, to compel the victims to work and prevent them from reporting the illegal activity to police. Because of the leadership Ms. Lynch showed in making such cases a priority, the bar owner was sentenced to 60 years in prison.

I am proud of the Senate's work to get the Trafficking Victims Protection Act reauthorized 2 years ago as part of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. We passed those laws with strong bipartisan support because we avoided unnecessary political fights, listened to the survivors, and responded to what they said they needed. I wish the Republican leadership would do the same on Senator CORNYN's trafficking bill. Unfortunately, it is many of the same Senators who voted against the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the Violence Against Women Act who have injected a divisive partisan fight here—over the objection of the very survivors they wish to help. It is this unnecessary fight that has stopped an otherwise bipartisan bill. And now, many of those same Senators are using this unnecessary conflict—a conflict they created—as an excuse not to move Loretta Lynch's nomination. So instead of working together to confirm a nominee with a proven commitment to stopping human trafficking, and instead of passing antitrafficking legislation that will help the survivors of this terrible crime, Senate Republicans have refused to do either one this month.

Loretta Lynch was recently named one of ''New York's New Abolitionists'' by the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition for her leadership in combating human trafficking. She has told members of the Judiciary Committee that human trafficking would be one of her top priorities if confirmed as Attorney General. And now, in the name of supporting human trafficking victims, Senate Republicans are blocking her nomination. That makes no sense. If we want to show our commitment to ending human trafficking, we should remove the unnecessary, partisan language from the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act—language that is not in the House-passed bill—and confirm Loretta Lynch without further delay.

It is time to stop delaying and making excuses. It is time to stop playing politics with our law enforcement and national security. There is only one holdup to Ms. Lynch's nomination to be Attorney General, and that is the party that the American public has entrusted to govern the Senate. I ask that she receive a confirmation vote this week so that she can get to the peoples' work as our next Attorney General of the United States.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING JOHN DONATO

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate John Donato of Smithfield, ME, for his achievements in coaching over the past 45 years. His hard work for girls' basketball teams across the State led to an impressive 500th win this past December, placing him in an exclusive club of extraordinary coaches. The season finished on a high note for his Lawrence High School team with a State championship win, marking his fifth State championship title over the course of his career.

Mr. Donato's coaching record is stunning. While he passed the 500 mark for basketball wins in December and now has 514, he has a grand total of 1,247 wins across all sports. His longest winning streak with a basketball team was an incredible 88 games. Mr. Donato has a long history of excellence in sports, from playing at the Boston Garden in semifinals games as a shooting guard in high school to bringing teams to wins as a coach at Houlton, Messalonskee, Mount View, Hall-Dale, and Lawrence High Schools. After attending Ricker College, Mr. Donato spent an impressive 18 years coaching basketball and 25 years coaching baseball at Houlton alone.

While he was coach, the Houlton girls' basketball team won nine Eastern Maine Class B titles in 11 years and four State championships in 6 years. They had 261 wins overall. On top of that, his baseball team won two Eastern Maine titles, with 324 wins overall, and the golf team won two State championships. Mr. Donato then moved to central Maine, and after a year coaching at Hall-Dale High School, he began coaching at Messalonskee High School. There his team went 17–1 during his first season, a major turnaround from their 5–13 run the previous year. He would spend 8 years at Messalonskee, followed by 4 years at Mount View High School, and then began coaching girls' basketball at Lawrence in 2010. The girls' State championship victory this year marks Lawrence's first in 21 years.

I am not the first to recognize Mr. Donato's great achievements. He was the McDonald's All-Star Coach of the Year 12 times, Eastern Maine Class B Coach of the Year 8 times, Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference Coach of the Year 4 times, and State of Maine Girls' Basketball Coach of the Year 5 times.

Mr. Donato is not only a coach, but also a teacher and former business owner, now in his 14th year teaching science at Lawrence High School. In each respect, he has proven a strong commitment to his community. Whether in the gym or the classroom, Mr. Donato brings knowledge of leadership and team building that is invaluable for our students. I am proud to represent people such as Coach Donato, an outstanding citizen of Maine, in the U.S. Senate. On the occasion of his 500th win and fifth State championship title, I extend my congratulations to him and the teams he has coached over the years.•

KENNEBUNK ROTARY CLUB 90TH ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, I wish to honor the many years of service provided by the Kennebunk Rotary Club, which is now entering its 90th year as an integral part of the Kennebunk community. The Kennebunk Rotary Club is an organization founded on a steadfast dedication to ''Service Above Self'', a motto that I believe we should all strive to fulfill.

I have had the privilege of speaking with rotary members on multiple occasions and I value their insight as important members of their local communities. I have also attended a number of rotary club meetings in Maine and as the son of a rotarian I have seen firsthand the positive impact that Rotary International has on communities in Maine and across the country.

For generations, local students, families, seniors, and people around the world have benefited from the Kennebunk Rotary Club and the many charitable events that it hosts annually. Indeed, some of these events have been a source of Kennebunk pride for years. These include cyber-crime awareness trainings for seniors, a 5K every summer, and a Christmas party to provide gifts for children who otherwise wouldn't have any under the tree.

In addition to these community events, the Kennebunk Rotary Club sponsors philanthropic programs such as the club's annual scholarship fund, which provides several local high school seniors with up to a $1,500 to cover some college expenses. Scholarship programs such as the Kennebunk Rotary Club's open the door to success for Kennebunk graduates. The first recipient of this scholarship, Thomas Putnam, demonstrates the success of the program. Several years after he received his scholarship funds, he joined the Kennebunk Rotary Club and is today the director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Massachusetts.

Finally, the Kennebunk Rotary Club has been able to extend their love of community beyond the bounds of their scenic hometown, crossing international borders to help those in need. After a train carrying crude oil exploded in the small town of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, the Kennebunk Rotary Club and the rest of Rotary International District 7780 sprang into action. They helped raise over $25,000 in donations, which was used to provide 400 children with Christmas presents. It was my pleasure to work with Rotary International and U.S. Customs to ensure that those gifts arrived safely in Lac-Mégantic. Through collaboration and a little hard work, the Kennebunk Rotary Club was able to make a huge impact on the lives of many.

I would like to again thank the Kennebunk Rotary Club, and congratulate them on their 90 years of dedication to ''Service Above Self.'' Their investment in Kennebunk, the great State of Maine, and communities across the globe has had a great effect on students, families, and seniors and will continue to open the doors of opportunity for years to come.•

RECOGNIZING RxIMPACT DAY

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I recognize the seventh annual RxIMPACT Day on Capitol Hill. This is a special day where we recognize pharmacies' contribution to the American healthcare system. This year's event organized by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, takes place on March 25–26. Nearly 400 individuals from the pharmacy community—including practicing pharmacists, pharmacy school faculty and students, State pharmacy leaders and pharmacy company executives—will visit Capitol Hill. They will share their views with Congress about the importance of supporting legislation that protects access to community and neighborhood pharmacies and that utilizes pharmacists to improve the quality and reduce the costs of providing health care.

Advocates from 45 States have traveled to Washington to talk about the pharmacy community's contributions in over 40,000 community pharmacies nationwide. These important health care providers are here to educate Congress about the value of pharmacists and protect access to the essential services they provide as part of our health care delivery system. And just as these providers traveled to meet with us, Members of Congress and their staff have toured retail chain pharmacies in our own communities more than 325 times since 2009.

As cochair of the Senate Community Pharmacy Caucus, I recognize that the local pharmacist is a trusted, highly accessible health care provider deeply committed to providing the highest quality care in the most efficient manner possible. Patients have always relied on their local pharmacist to meet their health care needs.

As demand for health care services continues to grow, pharmacists have expanded their role in health care delivery, partnering with physicians, nurses and other health care providers to meet their patients' needs. Innovative services provided by pharmacists do even more to improve patient health care. Pharmacists are highly valued by those that rely on them most—those in rural and underserved areas, as well as older Americans, and those struggling to manage chronic diseases. Pharmacy services improve patients' quality of life as well as health care affordability. By helping patients take their medications effectively and providing preventive services, pharmacists help avoid more costly forms of care. Pharmacists also help patients identify strategies to save money, such as through better understanding of their pharmacy benefits, using generic medications, and obtaining 90-day supplies of prescription drugs from local pharmacies.

Pharmacists are the Nation's most accessible health care providers. In many communities, especially in rural areas, the local pharmacist is a patient's most direct link to health care. Eighty-nine percent of Americans reside within a 5-mile radius of a community pharmacy. Pharmacists are one of our Nation's most trusted health care professionals. Utilizing their specialized education, pharmacists play a major role in medication therapy management, disease-state management, immunizations, health care screenings, and other health care services designed to improve patient health and reduce overall health care costs. Pharmacists are also expanding their role into new models of care based on quality of services and outcomes, such as accountable care organizations, ACOs, and medical homes.

As we refine health care reform and seek new strategies to improve patient care, pharmacists will play a critical role. I believe Congress should look at every opportunity to make sure that pharmacists are allowed to utilize their training to the fullest to provide the services that can improve care and lower costs. In recognition of the seventh annual RxIMPACT Day on Capitol Hill, I would like to congratulate pharmacy leaders, pharmacists, students, executives, and the entire pharmacy community, for their contributions to the good health of the American people.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2015 BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN, RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON MARCH 20, 2015—PM 11

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to my constitutional authority and as contemplated by section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act as amended in 1989, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's fiscal year (FY) 2015 Budget and Financial Plan. This transmittal does not represent an endorsement of the contents of the D.C. government's requests.

The proposed FY 2015 Budget and Financial Plan reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For FY 2015, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of $12.6 billion.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 20, 2015.*

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, without amendment:

S.J. Res. 8. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES DURING ADJOURNMENT

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of March 19, 2015, the following reports of committees were submitted on March 20, 2015:

By Mr. ENZI, from the Committee on the Budget, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 11. An original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS DURING ADJOURNMENT

On March 20, 2015, under the authority of the order of the Senate of March 19, 2015, the following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. ENZI:

S. Con. Res. 11. An original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; from the Committee on the Budget; placed on the calendar.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 829. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to refine how Medicare pays for orthotics and prosthetics and to improve beneficiary experience and outcomes with orthotic and prosthetic care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL):

S. 830. A bill to increase the maximum percentage of funds available to the Department of Energy for laboratory directed research and development; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 831. A bill to reduce the number of nuclear-armed submarines operated by the Navy, to prohibit the development of a new long-range penetrating bomber aircraft, to prohibit the procurement of new intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 832. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the provision of behavioral health readiness services to certain members of the Selected Reserve of the Armed Forces based on need, to expand eligibility to such members for readjustment counseling from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 833. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility projects for which appropriations were made for fiscal year 2015, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 834. A bill to amend the law relating to sport fish restoration and recreational boating safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 835. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to recognize Indian tribal governments for purposes of determining under the adoption credit whether a child has special needs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BURR, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 836. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal certain limitations on health care benefits enacted by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 837. A bill to modify the criteria used by the Corps of Engineers to dredge small ports; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 838. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish a national usury rate for consumer credit transactions; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 839. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the rural add-on payment in the Medicare home health benefit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. REED, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 840. A bill to require certain protections for student loan borrowers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. ERNST (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 841. A bill to expand eligibility for health care under the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to include certain veterans seeking mental health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL):

S. Res. 107. A resolution recognizing the 70th anniversary of White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico and commemorating the unique place in history, and national security importance, of the range; to the Committee on Armed Services.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 125

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 125, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes.

S. 142

At the request of Mr. UDALL, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 142, a bill to require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate a rule to require child safety packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes.

S. 149

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 149, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 150

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 150, a bill to provide for a biennial budget process and a biennial appropriations process and to enhance oversight and the performance of the Federal Government.

S. 170

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes.

S. 183

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 183, a bill to repeal the annual fee on health insurance providers enacted by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 301

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 301, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 332

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 332, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent the extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program and the increased payments under the Medicare low-volume hospital program.

S. 335

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 335, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve 529 plans.

S. 366

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 366, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 375

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 375, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a reduced rate of excise tax on beer produced domestically by certain qualifying producers.

S. 398

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 398, a bill to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 and title 38, United States Code, to require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to expand access to such care and services, and for other purposes.

S. 477

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 477, a bill to terminate Operation Choke Point.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 488, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 568

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 568, a bill to extend the trade adjustment assistance program, and for other purposes.

S. 578

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 578, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, supra.

S. 579

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 579, a bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 to strengthen the independence of the Inspectors General, and for other purposes.

S. 650

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 650, a bill to extend the positive train control system implementation deadline, and for other purposes.

S. 655

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 655, a bill to prohibit the use of funds by the Secretary of the Interior to make a final determination on the listing of the northern long-eared bat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

S. 679

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 679, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase access to Medicare data.

S. 725

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 725, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act, and for other purposes.

S. 774

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 774, a bill to amend the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Act of 1978 to improve the examination of depository institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 780

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota

(Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 780, a bill to permit the televising of Supreme Court proceedings.

S. 793

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 793, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes.

S. 796

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 796, a bill to incentivize State support for postsecondary education and to promote increased access and affordability for higher education for students, including Dreamer students.

S. 802

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 802, a bill to authorize the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to provide assistance to support the rights of women and girls in developing countries, and for other purposes.

S. 806

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 806, a bill to amend section 31306 of title 49, United States Code, to recognize hair as an alternative specimen for preemployment and random controlled substances testing of commercial motor vehicle drivers and for other purposes.

S. 812

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) were added as cosponsors of S. 812, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 824

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 824, a bill to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 4

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 4, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 833. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility projects for which appropriations were made for fiscal year 2015, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I speak today regarding the introduction of a bill, cosponsored by Senator BOXER, to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs with the authority to obligate and expend previously appropriated funds in order to begin construction on critical projects in Los Angeles, Long Beach, and San Diego, CA, as well as in Canandaigua, NY.

In December of 2014, Congress passed the Consolidated and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015, which provided $446,800,000 for major construction projects at these Veterans Affairs Medical Centers. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs cannot spend the money that has already been appropriated and begin construction on these projects because it lacks a separate authorization, which is required by law.

The funding provided for the three California projects will be used to make critical, time-sensitive seismic safety corrections to structures in West Los Angeles, Long Beach, and San Diego. These buildings, which include a spinal cord injury clinic, a mental health care facility, and a community living center, are at exceptionally high risk of collapse or suffering severe damage during an earthquake. If a major earthquake struck in proximity to one of these Medical Centers while it was in use by veterans and the Department's employees, there could be numerous injuries and deaths. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates there is a greater than 99 percent chance that a magnitude 6.7 or greater earthquake will strike California in the next 30 years.

It is important to note that even less severe earthquakes can cause damage to seismically unsafe buildings that result in injuries and deaths. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services believes that the damage to seismically unfit buildings caused by the magnitude 6.0 earthquake that hit Napa, CA, on August 24, 2014 at 3:20 a.m. would likely have resulted in many more deaths and injuries if it had struck during business hours when these structures were in use. As it was, the earthquake caused over 200 injuries and one fatality. In fact, the U.S. Geological Survey estimates that a 6.0 magnitude earthquake hits California every 1.2 years on average. This is a terrifying figure, and it is why I strongly believe that Congress must enact this legislation without delay.

I appreciate that the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee worked extremely hard to pass important legislation last year to address the veterans' health care access crisis and that it, therefore, did not report a construction authorization bill. However, in the case of these four projects, the money has already been appropriated and is available for expenditure as soon as an authorization is forthcoming from Congress.

More hearings and delays are unnecessary to determine whether the Senate should pass this legislation. The Senate Appropriations Committee held hearings with the Department on these projects in 2014 as it reviewed the President's fiscal year 2015 Budget Request. The Committee marked up and reported the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill in a bipartisan fashion. Congress voted in a bipartisan fashion to pass this bill and approve funding for these projects as part of the Consolidated and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015.

I want to reiterate that Congress appropriated funding for these four major medical projects in 2014, and the Department is ready to start construction today. However, due only to the lack of a separate authorization, the Department cannot start this vital work to protect our veterans and Federal employees. This is exactly why Americans believe that the Federal Government does not work. How does Congress explain this unnecessary delay to veterans who go to medical appointments in the buildings at risk of collapse or major damage? There is no reason to delay authorizing these projects when the money has already been appropriated.

I urge my colleagues to join me in quickly approving this legislation so that the Department can begin modification of buildings that currently leave veterans and the Department's employees in harm's way before the next earthquake strikes California. Congress must act before the next earthquake strikes.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 838. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish a national usury rate for consumer credit transactions; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 838

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protecting Consumers from Unreasonable Credit Rates Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) attempts have been made to prohibit usurious interest rates in America since colonial times;

(2) at the Federal level, in 2006, Congress enacted a Federal 36 percent annualized usury cap for servicemembers and their families for covered credit products, as defined by the Department of Defense, which curbed payday, car title, and tax refund lending around military bases;

(3) notwithstanding such attempts to curb predatory lending, high-cost lending persists in all 50 States due to loopholes in State laws, safe harbor laws for specific forms of credit, and the exportation of unregulated interest rates permitted by preemption;

(4) due to the lack of a comprehensive Federal usury cap, consumers annually pay approximately $17,000,000,000 for high-cost overdraft loans, as much as $7,000,000,000 for storefront and online payday loans, and additional amounts in unreported revenues from bank direct deposit advance loans and high-cost online installment loans;

(5) cash-strapped consumers pay on average 400 percent annual interest for payday loans, 300 percent annual interest for car title loans, up to 3,500 percent for bank overdraft loans, and triple-digit rates for online installment loans;

(6) a national maximum interest rate that includes all forms of fees and closes all loopholes is necessary to eliminate such predatory lending; and

(7) alternatives to predatory lending that encourage small dollar loans with minimal or no fees, installment payment schedules, and affordable repayment periods should be encouraged.

SEC. 3. NATIONAL MAXIMUM INTEREST RATE.

Chapter 2 of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1631 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 140B. MAXIMUM RATES OF INTEREST.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no creditor may make an extension of credit to a consumer with respect to which the fee and interest rate, as defined in subsection (b), exceeds 36 percent.

"(b) FEE AND INTEREST RATE DEFINED.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, the fee and interest rate includes all charges payable, directly or indirectly, incident to, ancillary to, or as a condition of the extension of credit, including—

"(A) any payment compensating a creditor or prospective creditor for—

"(i) an extension of credit or making available a line of credit, such as fees connected with credit extension or availability such as numerical periodic rates, annual fees, cash advance fees, and membership fees; or

"(ii) any fees for default or breach by a borrower of a condition upon which credit was extended, such as late fees, creditor-imposed not sufficient funds fees charged when a borrower tenders payment on a debt with a check drawn on insufficient funds, overdraft fees, and over limit fees;

"(B) all fees which constitute a finance charge, as defined by rules of the Bureau in accordance with this title;

"(C) credit insurance premiums, whether optional or required; and

"(D) all charges and costs for ancillary products sold in connection with or incidental to the credit transaction.

"(2) TOLERANCES.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a credit obligation that is payable in at least 3 fully amortizing installments over at least 90 days, the term 'fee and interest rate' does not include—

"(i) application or participation fees that in total do not exceed the greater of $30 or, if there is a limit to the credit line, 5 percent of the credit limit, up to $120, if—

"(I) such fees are excludable from the finance charge pursuant to section 106 and regulations issued thereunder;

"(II) such fees cover all credit extended or renewed by the creditor for 12 months; and

"(III) the minimum amount of credit extended or available on a credit line is equal to $300 or more;

"(ii) a late fee charged as authorized by State law and by the agreement that does not exceed either $20 per late payment or $20 per month; or

"(iii) a creditor-imposed not sufficient funds fee charged when a borrower tenders payment on a debt with a check drawn on insufficient funds that does not exceed $15.

"(B) ADJUSTMENTS FOR INFLATION.—The Bureau may adjust the amounts of the tolerances established under this paragraph for inflation over time, consistent with the primary goals of protecting consumers and ensuring that the 36 percent fee and interest rate limitation is not circumvented.

"(c) CALCULATIONS.—

"(1) OPEN END CREDIT PLANS.—For an open end credit plan—

"(A) the fee and interest rate shall be calculated each month, based upon the sum of all fees and finance charges described in subsection (b) charged by the creditor during the preceding 1-year period, divided by the average daily balance; and

"(B) if the credit account has been open less than 1 year, the fee and interest rate shall be calculated based upon the total of all fees and finance charges described in subsection (b)(1) charged by the creditor since the plan was opened, divided by the average daily balance, and multiplied by the quotient of 12 divided by the number of full months that the credit plan has been in existence.

"(2) OTHER CREDIT PLANS.—For purposes of this section, in calculating the fee and interest rate, the Bureau shall require the method of calculation of annual percentage rate specified in section 107(a)(1), except that the amount referred to in that section 107(a)(1) as the 'finance charge' shall include all fees, charges, and payments described in subsection (b)(1) of this section.

"(3) ADJUSTMENTS AUTHORIZED.—The Bureau may make adjustments to the calculations in paragraphs (1) and (2), but the primary goals of such adjustment shall be to protect consumers and to ensure that the 36 percent fee and interest rate limitation is not circumvented.

"(d) DEFINITION OF CREDITOR.—As used in this section, the term 'creditor' has the same meaning as in section 702(e) of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (15 U.S.C. 1691a(e)).

"(e) NO EXEMPTIONS PERMITTED.—The exemption authority of the Bureau under section 105 shall not apply to the rates established under this section or the disclosure requirements under section 127(b)(6).

"(f) DISCLOSURE OF FEE AND INTEREST RATE FOR CREDIT OTHER THAN OPEN END CREDIT PLANS.—In addition to the disclosure requirements under section 127(b)(6), the Bureau may prescribe regulations requiring disclosure of the fee and interest rate established under this section.

"(g) RELATION TO STATE LAW.—Nothing in this section may be construed to preempt any provision of State law that provides greater protection to consumers than is provided in this section.

"(h) CIVIL LIABILITY AND ENFORCEMENT.—In addition to remedies available to the consumer under section 130(a), any payment compensating a creditor or prospective creditor, to the extent that such payment is a transaction made in violation of this section, shall be null and void, and not enforceable by any party in any court or alternative dispute resolution forum, and the creditor or any subsequent holder of the obligation shall promptly return to the consumer any principal, interest, charges, and fees, and any security interest associated with such transaction. Notwithstanding any statute of limitations or repose, a violation of this section may be raised as a matter of defense by recoupment or setoff to an action to collect such debt or repossess related security at any time.

"(i) VIOLATIONS.—Any person that violates this section, or seeks to enforce an agreement made in violation of this section, shall be subject to, for each such violation, 1 year in prison and a fine in an amount equal to the greater of—

"(1) 3 times the amount of the total accrued debt associated with the subject transaction; or

"(2) $50,000.

"(j) STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL.—An action to enforce this section may be brought by the appropriate State attorney general in any United States district court or any other court of competent jurisdiction within 3 years from the date of the violation, and such attorney general may obtain injunctive relief.".

SEC. 4. DISCLOSURE OF FEE AND INTEREST RATE FOR OPEN END CREDIT PLANS.

Section 127(b)(6) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1637(b)(6)) is amended by striking "the total finance charge expressed" and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting "the fee and interest rate, displayed as 'FAIR', established under section 141.".

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 839. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the rural add-on payment in the Medicare home health benefit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague from Washington to introduce the Preserve Access to Rural Home Health Services Act of 2015 to extend the modest increase in payments for home health services in rural areas that otherwise will expire on January 1 of next year.

Home health has become an increasingly important part of our health care system. The kinds of highly skilled—and often technically complex—services that our Nation's home health caregivers provide have enabled millions of our most frail and vulnerable older and disabled citizens to avoid hospitals and nursing homes and stay just where they want to be—in the comfort, privacy, and security of their own homes. I have accompanied several of Maine's caring home health nurses on their visits to patients and have seen first hand the difference that they are making for patients and their families.

Surveys have shown that the delivery of home health services in rural areas can be as much as 12 to 15 percent more costly because of the extra travel time required to cover long distances between patients, higher transportation expenses, and other factors. Because of the longer travel times, rural caregivers are unable to make as many visits in a day as their urban counterparts. For example, home health care agencies in Aroostook County in Northern Maine, where I am from, cover almost 6,700 square miles, with an average population of less than 11 persons per square mile. These agencies' costs are understandably much higher than other agencies located in more urban areas due to the long distances the staff must drive to see clients. Moreover, the staff is not able to see as many patients due to time on the road.

Agencies serving rural areas are also frequently smaller than their urban counterparts, which means that their relative costs are higher. Smaller agencies with fewer patients and fewer visits mean that fixed costs, particularly those associated with meeting regulatory requirements, are spread over a much smaller number of patients and visits, increasing overall per-patient and per-visit costs.

Moreover, in many rural areas, home health agencies are the primary caregivers for homebound beneficiaries with limited access to transportation. These rural patients often require more time and care than their urban counterparts and are understandably more expensive for agencies to serve. If the extra three per cent rural payment is not extended, agencies may be forced to make decisions not to accept rural patients with greater care needs. That could translate into less access to health care for ill, homebound seniors. The result would likely be that these seniors would be hospitalized more frequently and would have to seek care in nursing homes, adding considerable cost to the system.

Failure to extend the rural add-on payment would only put more pressure on rural home health agencies that are already operating on very narrow margins and could force some of the agencies to close their doors altogether. If any of these agencies were forced to close, the Medicare patients in that region could lose all of their access to home care.

The legislation we are introducing today will extend the rural add-on for 5 years and help to ensure that Medicare patients in rural areas continue to have access to the home health services they need. Moreover, we would offset costs of the bill by reducing the home health outlier fund by .25 percent over the same 5 years. I urge our colleagues to join us as cosponsors.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. REED, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 840. A bill to require certain protections for student loan borrowers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 840

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights''.

SEC. 2. TRUTH IN LENDING ACT AMENDMENTS.

The Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 128 (15 U.S.C. 1638)—

(A) in subsection (e)—

(i) in the subsection heading, by striking ''PRIVATE'';

(ii) in paragraph (1)(O), by striking ''paragraph (6)'' and inserting ''paragraph (9)'';

(iii) in paragraph (2)(L), by striking ''paragraph (6)'' and inserting ''paragraph (9)'';

(iv) in paragraph (4)(C), by striking ''paragraph (7)'' and inserting ''paragraph (10)'';

(v) by redesignating paragraphs (5) through (11) as paragraphs (8) through (14), respectively;

(vi) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) DISCLOSURES BEFORE FIRST FULLY AMORTIZED PAYMENT.—Not fewer than 30 days and not more than 150 days before the first fully amortized payment on a postsecondary education loan is due from the borrower, the postsecondary educational lender shall disclose to the borrower, clearly and conspicuously—

''(A) the information described in—

''(i) paragraph (2)(A) (adjusted, as necessary, for the rate of interest in effect on the date the first fully amortized payment on a postsecondary education loan is due);

''(ii) subparagraphs (B) through (G) of paragraph (2);

''(iii) paragraph (2)(H) (adjusted, as necessary, for the rate of interest in effect on the date the first fully amortized payment on a postsecondary education loan is due);

''(iv) paragraph (2)(K); and

''(v) subparagraphs (O) and (P) of paragraph (2);

''(B) the scheduled date upon which the first fully amortized payment is due;

''(C) the name of the lender and servicer, and the address to which communications and payments should be sent including a telephone number and website where the borrower may obtain additional information;

''(D) a description of alternative repayment plans, including loan consolidation or refinancing, and servicemember or veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) or other Federal or State law related to postsecondary education loans; and

''(E) a statement that a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under paragraph (15)(I) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits related to postsecondary education loans, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to paragraph (15)(I).

''(6) DISCLOSURES WHEN BORROWER IS 30 DAYS DELINQUENT.—Not fewer than 5 days after a borrower becomes 30 days delinquent on a postsecondary education loan, the postsecondary educational lender shall disclose to the borrower, clearly and conspicuously—

''(A) the date on which the loan will be charged-off (as defined in paragraph (15)(A)) or assigned to collections, including the consequences of such charge-off or assignment to collections, if no payment is made;

''(B) the minimum payment that the borrower must make to avoid the loan being charged off (as defined in paragraph (15)(A)) or assigned to collection, and the minimum payment that the borrower must make to bring the loan current;

''(C) a statement informing the borrower that a payment of less than the minimum payment described in subparagraph (B) could result in the loan being charged off (as defined in paragraph (15)(A)) or assigned to collection; and

''(D) a statement that a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under paragraph (15)(I) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits related to postsecondary education loans, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to paragraph (15)(I).

''(7) DISCLOSURES WHEN BORROWER IS HAVING DIFFICULTY MAKING PAYMENT OR IS 60 DAYS DELINQUENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not fewer than 5 days after a borrower notifies a postsecondary educational lender that the borrower is having difficulty making payment or a borrower becomes 60 days delinquent on a postsecondary education loan, the postsecondary educational lender shall—

''(i) complete a full review of the borrower's postsecondary education loan and make a reasonable effort to obtain the information necessary to determine—

''(I) if the borrower is eligible for an alternative repayment plan, including loan consolidation or refinancing; and

''(II) if the borrower is eligible for servicemember or veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) or other Federal or State law related to postsecondary education loans;

''(ii) provide the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, information about alternative repayment plans and benefits for which the borrower is eligible, including all terms, conditions, and fees or costs associated with such repayment plan, pursuant to paragraph (8)(D);

''(iii) allow the borrower not less than 30 days to apply for an alternative repayment plan or benefits, if eligible; and

''(iv) notify the borrower that a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under paragraph (15)(I) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits related to postsecondary education loans, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to paragraph (15)(I).

''(B) FORBEARANCE OR DEFERMENT.—If a borrower notifies the postsecondary educational lender that a long-term alternative repayment plan is not appropriate, the postsecondary educational lender may comply with this paragraph by providing the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, information about short-term options to address an anticipated short-term difficulty in making payments, such as forbearance or deferment options, including all terms, conditions, and fees or costs associated with such options pursuant to paragraph (8)(D).

''(C) NOTIFICATION PROCESS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Each postsecondary educational lender shall establish a process, in accordance subparagraph (A), for a borrower to notify the lender that—

''(I) the borrower is having difficulty making payments on a postsecondary education loan; and

''(II) a long-term alternative repayment plan is not needed.

''(ii) CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU REQUIREMENTS.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall promulgate rules establishing minimum standards for postsecondary educational lenders in carrying out the requirements of this paragraph and a model form for borrowers to notify postsecondary educational lenders of the information under this paragraph.'';

(vii) in paragraph (8), as redesignated by clause (v), by adding at the end the following:

''(D) MODEL DISCLOSURE FORM FOR ALTERNATIVE REPAYMENT PLANS, FORBEARANCE, AND DEFERMENT OPTIONS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Student

Loan Borrower Bill of Rights, the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall develop and issue model forms to allow borrowers to compare alternative repayment plans, forbearance, and deferment options with the borrower's existing repayment plan with respect to a postsecondary education loan. Such forms shall include the following:

''(i) The total amount to be paid over the life of the loan.

''(ii) The total amount in interest to be paid over the life of the loan.

''(iii) The monthly payment amount.

''(iv) The expected pay-off date.

''(v) Related fees and costs.

''(vi) Eligibility requirements, and how the borrower can apply for the alternative repayment plan, forbearance, or deferment option.

''(vii) Any relevant consequences due to action or inaction, such as default, including any actions that would result in the loss of eligibility for alternative repayment plans, forbearance, or deferment options.'';

(viii) in paragraph (11), as redesignated by clause (v), by striking ''paragraph (7)'' and inserting ''paragraph (10)'';

(ix) by striking paragraph (13), as redesignated by clause (v), and inserting the following:

''(13) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

''(A) the terms 'covered educational institution', 'private educational lender', and 'private education loan' have the same meanings as in section 140; and

''(B) the term 'postsecondary education loan' means

''(i) a private education loan; or

''(ii) a loan made, insured, or guaranteed under part B, D, or E of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1071 et seq., 1087a et seq., and 1087aa et seq.).'';

(x) in paragraph (14), as redesignated by clause (v), by striking ''paragraph (5)'' and inserting ''paragraph (8)''; and

(xi) by adding at the end the following:

''(15) STUDENT LOAN BORROWER BILL OF RIGHTS.—

''(A) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

''(i) BORROWER.—The term 'borrower' means the person to whom a postsecondary education loan is extended.

''(ii) CHARGE OFF.—The term 'charge off' means charge to profit and loss, or subject to any similar action.

''(iii) QUALIFIED WRITTEN REQUEST.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualified written request' means a written correspondence of a borrower (other than notice on a payment medium supplied by the student loan servicer) transmitted by mail, facsimile, or electronically through an email address or website designated by the student loan servicer to receive communications from borrowers that—

''(aa) includes, or otherwise enables the student loan servicer to identify, the name and account of the borrower; and

''(bb) includes, to the extent applicable—

''(AA) sufficient detail regarding the information sought by the borrower; or

''(BB) a statement of the reasons for the belief of the borrower that there is an error regarding the account of the borrower.

''(II) CORRESPONDENCE DELIVERED TO OTHER ADDRESSES.—

''(aa) IN GENERAL.—A written correspondence of a borrower is a qualified written request if the written correspondence is transmitted to and received by a student loan servicer at a mailing address, facsimile number, email address, or website address other than the address or number designated by that student loan servicer to receive communications from borrowers but the written correspondence meets the requirements under items (aa) and (bb) of subclause (I).

''(bb) DUTY TO TRANSFER.—A student loan servicer shall, within a reasonable period of time, transfer a written correspondence of a borrower received by the student loan servicer at a mailing address, facsimile number, email address, or website address other than the address or number designated by that student loan servicer to receive communications from borrowers to the correct address or appropriate office or other unit of the student loan servicer.

''(cc) DATE OF RECEIPT.—A written correspondence of a borrower transferred in accordance with item (bb) shall be deemed to be received by the student loan servicer on the date on which the written correspondence is transferred to the correct address or appropriate office or other unit of the student loan servicer.

''(iv) SERVICER.—The term 'servicer' means the person responsible for the servicing of a postsecondary education loan, including any agent of such person or the person who makes, owns, or holds a loan if such person also services the loan.

''(v) SERVICING.—The term 'servicing' means—

''(I) receiving any scheduled periodic payments from a borrower pursuant to the terms of a postsecondary education loan;

''(II) making the payments of principal and interest and such other payments with respect to the amounts received from the borrower, as may be required pursuant to the terms of the loan; and

''(III) performing other administrative services with respect to the loan.

''(B) SALE, TRANSFER, OR ASSIGNMENT.—If the sale, other transfer, assignment, or transfer of servicing obligations of a postsecondary education loan results in a change in the identity of the party to whom the borrower must send subsequent payments or direct any communications concerning the loan—

''(i) the transferor shall—

''(I) notify the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, not fewer than 45 days before transferring a legally enforceable right to receive payment from the borrower on such loan, of—

''(aa) the sale or other transfer, assignment, or transfer of servicing obligations;

''(bb) the identity of the transferee;

''(cc) the name and address of the party to whom subsequent payments or communications must be sent;

''(dd) the telephone numbers and websites of both the transferor and the transferee;

''(ee) the effective date of the sale, transfer, or assignment;

''(ff) the date on which the transferor will stop accepting payment; and

''(gg) the date on which the transferee will begin accepting payment; and

''(II) forward any payment from a borrower with respect to such postsecondary education loan to the transferee, immediately upon receiving such payment, during the 60-day period beginning on the date on which the transferor stops accepting payment of such postsecondary education loan; and

''(ii) the transferee shall—

''(I) notify the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, not fewer than 45 days before acquiring a legally enforceable right to receive payment from the borrower on such loan, of—

''(aa) the sale or other transfer, assignment, or transfer of servicing obligations;

''(bb) the identity of the transferor:

''(cc) the name and address of the party to whom subsequent payments or communications must be sent;

''(dd) the telephone numbers and websites of both the transferor and the transferee;

''(ee) the effective date of the sale, transfer, assignment, or transfer of servicing obligations;

''(ff) the date on which the transferor will stop accepting payment; and

''(gg) the date on which the transferee will begin accepting payment;

''(II) accept as on-time and may not impose any late fee or finance charge for any payment from a borrower with respect to such postsecondary education loan that is forwarded from the transferor during the 60-day period beginning on the date on which the transferor stops accepting payment, if the transferor receives such payment on or before the applicable due date, including any grace period;

''(III) provide borrowers a simple, online process for transferring existing electronic fund transfer authority; and

''(IV) honor any promotion or benefit offered to the borrower or advertised by the previous owner or transferor of such postsecondary education loan.

''(C) MATERIAL CHANGE IN MAILING ADDRESS OR PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING PAYMENTS.—If a servicer makes a change in the mailing address, office, or procedures for handling payments with respect to any postsecondary education loan, and such change causes a delay in the crediting of the account of the borrower made during the 60-day period following the date on which such change took effect, the servicer may not impose any late fee or finance charge for a late payment on such postsecondary education loan.

''(D) APPLICATION OF PAYMENTS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Unless otherwise directed by the borrower of a postsecondary education loan, upon receipt of a payment, the servicer shall apply amounts first to the interest and fees owed on the payment due date, and then to the principal balance of the postsecondary education loan bearing the highest annual percentage rate, and then to each successive interest and fees and then principal balance bearing the next highest annual percentage rate, until the payment is exhausted. A borrower may instruct or expressly authorize the servicer to apply payments in a different manner.

''(ii) APPLICATION OF EXCESS AMOUNTS.—Unless otherwise directed by the borrower of a postsecondary education loan, upon receipt of a payment, the servicer shall apply amounts in excess of the minimum payment amount first to the interest and fees owed on the payment due date, and then to the principal balance of the postsecondary education loan balance bearing the highest annual percentage rate, and then to each successive interest and fees and principal balance bearing the next highest annual percentage rate, until the payment is exhausted. A borrower may instruct or expressly authorize the servicer to apply such excess payments in a different manner. A borrower may also voluntarily increase the periodic payment amount, including by increasing their recurring electronic payment, with the right to return to their original amortization schedule at any time. Servicers shall provide a simple, online method to allow borrowers to make voluntary one-time additional payments, voluntarily increase the amount of their periodic payment, and return to their original amortization schedule.

''(iii) APPLY PAYMENT ON DATE RECEIVED.—Unless otherwise directed by the borrower of a postsecondary education loan, a servicer shall apply payments to a borrower's account on the date the payment is received.

''(iv) PROMULGATION OF RULES.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, may promulgate rules for the application of postsecondary education loan payments that—

''(I) implements the requirements in this section;

''(II) minimizes the amount of fees and interest incurred by the borrower and the total loan amount paid by the borrower;

''(III) minimizes delinquencies, assignments to collection, and charge-offs;

''(IV) requires servicers to apply payments on the date received; and

''(V) allows the borrower to instruct the servicer to apply payments in a manner preferred by the borrower, including excess payments.

''(v) METHOD THAT BEST BENEFITS BORROWER.—In promulgating the rules under clause (iv), the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection shall choose the application method that best benefits the borrower and is compatible with existing repayment options.

''(E) LATE FEES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—A late fee may not be charged to a borrower for a postsecondary education loan under any of the following circumstances, either individually or in combination:

''(I) On a per-loan basis when a borrower has multiple postsecondary education loans in a billing group.

''(II) In an amount greater than 4 percent of the amount of the payment past due.

''(III) Before the end of the 15-day period beginning on the date the payment is due.

''(IV) More than once with respect to a single late payment.

''(V) The borrower fails to make a singular, non-successive regularly-scheduled payment on the postsecondary education loan.

''(ii) COORDINATION WITH SUBSEQUENT LATE FEES.—No late fee may be charged to a borrower for a postsecondary education loan relating to an insufficient payment if the payment is made on or before the due date of the payment, or within any applicable grace period for the payment, if the insufficiency is attributable only to a late fee relating to an earlier payment, and the payment is otherwise a full payment for the applicable period.

''(F) REHABILITATION OF LOANS.—If a borrower of a private education loan successfully and voluntarily makes 9 payments within 20 days of the due date during 10 consecutive months of amounts owed on the private education loan, or otherwise brings the private education loan current after the loan is charged-off, the loan shall be considered rehabilitated, and the lender or servicer shall request that any consumer reporting agency to which the charge-off was reported remove the delinquency that led to the charge-off and the charge-off from the borrower's credit history.

''(G) BORROWER INQUIRIES.—

''(i) DUTY OF STUDENT LOAN SERVICERS TO RESPOND TO BORROWER INQUIRIES.—

''(I) NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF REQUEST.—If a borrower of a postsecondary education loan submits a qualified written request to the student loan servicer for information relating to the student loan servicing of the postsecondary education loan, the student loan servicer shall provide a written response acknowledging receipt of the qualified written request within 5 business days unless any action requested by the borrower is taken within such period.

''(II) ACTION WITH RESPECT TO INQUIRY.—Not later than 30 business days after the receipt from a borrower of a qualified written request under subclause (I) and, if applicable, before taking any action with respect to the qualified written request of the borrower, the student loan servicer shall—

''(aa) make appropriate corrections in the account of the borrower, including the crediting of any late fees, and transmit to the borrower a written notification of such correction (which shall include the name and toll-free or collect-call telephone number of a representative of the student loan servicer who can provide assistance to the borrower);

''(bb) after conducting an investigation, provide the borrower with a written explanation or clarification that includes—

''(AA) to the extent applicable, a statement of the reasons for which the student loan servicer believes the account of the borrower is correct as determined by the student loan servicer; and

''(BB) the name and toll-free or collect-call telephone number of an individual employed by, or the office or department of, the student loan servicer who can provide assistance to the borrower; or

''(cc) after conducting an investigation, provide the borrower with a written explanation or clarification that includes—

''(AA) information requested by the borrower or explanation of why the information requested is unavailable or cannot be obtained by the student loan servicer; and

''(BB) the name and toll-free or collect-call telephone number of an individual employed by, or the office or department of, the student loan servicer who can provide assistance to the borrower.

''(III) LIMITED EXTENSION OF RESPONSE TIME.—

''(aa) IN GENERAL.—There may be 1 extension of the 30-day period described in subclause (II) of not more than 15 days if, before the end of such 30-day period, the student loan servicer notifies the borrower of the extension and the reasons for the delay in responding.

''(bb) REPORTS TO BUREAU.—Each student loan servicer shall, on an annual basis, report to the Bureau the aggregate number of extensions sought by the student loan servicer under item (aa).

''(ii) PROTECTION OF CREDIT INFORMATION.—During the 60-day period beginning on the date on which a student loan servicer receives a qualified written request from a borrower relating to a dispute regarding payments by the borrower, a student loan servicer may not provide negative credit information to any consumer reporting agency (as defined in section 603 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681a)) relating to the subject of the qualified written request or to such period, including any information relating to a late payment or payment owed by the borrower on the borrower's postsecondary education loan.

''(H) SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR CERTAIN BORROWERS.—A student loan servicer shall designate an office or other unit of the student loan servicer to act as a point of contact regarding postsecondary education loans for—

''(i) a borrower who is not less than 60 days delinquent under the postsecondary education loan;

''(ii) a borrower who seeks information regarding, seeks to enter an agreement for, or seeks to resolve an issue under a repayment option that requires subsequent submission of supporting documentation; and

''(iii) a borrower who seeks to modify the terms of the repayment of the postsecondary education loan because of hardship.

''(I) SERVICEMEMBERS, VETERANS, AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION LOANS.—

''(i) SERVICEMEMBER AND VETERANS LIAISON.—Each servicer shall designate an employee to act as the servicemember and veterans liaison who is responsible for answering inquiries from servicemembers and veterans, and is specially trained on servicemember and veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) and other Federal or State laws related to postsecondary education loans.

''(ii) TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER.—Each servicer shall maintain a toll-free telephone number that shall—

''(I) connect directly to the servicemember and veterans liaison designated under clause (i); and

''(II) be made available on the primary internet website of the servicer and on monthly billing statements.

''(iii) PROHIBITION ON CHARGE OFFS AND DEFAULT.—A lender or servicer may not charge off or report a postsecondary education loan as delinquent, assigned to collection (internally or by referral to a third party), in default, or charged-off to a credit reporting agency if the borrower is on active duty in the Armed Forces (as defined in section 101(d)(1) of title 10, United States Code) serving in a combat zone (as designated by the President under section 112(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986).

''(iv) ADDITIONAL LIAISONS.—The Secretary shall determine additional entities with whom borrowers interact, including guaranty agencies, that shall designate an employee to act as the servicemember and veterans liaison who is responsible for answering inquiries from servicemembers and veterans and is specially trained on servicemembers and veteran benefits and option under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.).

''(J) BORROWER'S LOAN HISTORY.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—A servicer shall make available through a secure website, or in writing upon request, the loan history of each borrower for each postsecondary education loan, separately designating—

''(I) payment history;

''(II) loan history, including any forbearances, deferrals, delinquencies, assignment to collection, and charge offs;

''(III) annual percentage rate history; and

''(IV) key loan terms, including application of payments to interest, principal, and fees, origination date, principal, capitalized interest, annual percentage rate, including any cap, loan term, and any contractual incentives.

''(ii) ORIGINAL DOCUMENTATION.—A servicer shall make available to the borrower, if requested, at no charge, copies of the original loan documents and the promissory note for each postsecondary education loan.

''(K) ERROR RESOLUTION.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall promulgate rules requiring servicers to establish error resolution procedures to allow borrowers to inquire about errors related to their postsecondary education loans and obtain timely resolution of such errors.

''(L) ADDITIONAL SERVICING STANDARDS.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, may establish additional servicing standards to reduce delinquencies, assignment to collections, defaults, and charge-offs, and to ensure borrowers understand their rights and obligations related to their postsecondary education loans.

''(M) ARBITRATION.—

''(i) WAIVER OF RIGHTS AND REMEDIES.—Any rights and remedies available to borrowers against servicers may not be waived by any agreement, policy, or form, including by a predispute arbitration agreement.

''(ii) PREDISPUTE ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS.—No predispute arbitration agreement shall be valid or enforceable by a servicer, including as a third-party beneficiary or by estoppel, if the agreement requires arbitration of a dispute with respect to a postsecondary education loan. This subparagraph applies to predispute arbitration agreements entered into before the date of enactment of the Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights, as well as on and after such date of enactment, if the violation that is the subject of the dispute occurred on or after such date of enactment.

''(N) ENFORCEMENT.—The provisions of this paragraph shall be enforced by the agencies specified in subsections (a) through (d) of section 108, in the manner set forth in that section or under any other applicable authorities available to such agencies by law.

''(O) PREEMPTION.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to preempt any provision of State law regarding postsecondary education loans where the State law provides stronger consumer protections.

''(P) CIVIL LIABILITY.—A servicer that fails to comply with any requirement imposed under this paragraph shall be deemed a creditor that has failed to comply with a requirement under this chapter for purposes of liability under section 130 and such servicer shall be subject to the liability provisions under such section, including the provisions under paragraphs (1), (2)(A)(i), (2)(B), and (3) of section 130(a).

''(Q) ELIGIBILITY FOR DISCHARGE.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall promulgate rules requiring lenders and servicers of loans described in paragraph (13)(B)(ii) to—

''(i) identify and contact borrowers who may be eligible for student loan discharge by the Secretary;

''(ii) provide the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, information about obtaining such discharge; and

''(iii) create a streamlined process for eligible borrowers to apply for and receive such discharge.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(g) INFORMATION TO BE AVAILABLE AT NO CHARGE.—The information required to be disclosed under this section shall be made available at no charge to the borrower.''; and

(2) in section 130(a)—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking ''128(e)(7)'' and inserting ''128(e)(10)''; and

(B) in the flush matter at the end, by striking ''or paragraph (4)(C), (6), (7), or (8) of section 128(e),'' and inserting ''or paragraph (4)(C), (9), (10), or (11) of section 128(e),''.

SEC. 3. STUDENT LOAN INFORMATION BY ELIGIBLE LENDERS.

Section 433 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1083) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (12), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (13), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(14) a statement that—

''(A) the borrower may be entitled to servicemember and veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) and other Federal or State laws; and

''(B) a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under section 128(e)(15)(I)(i) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(15)(I)(i)) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to such section.''; and

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following:

''(D) A statement that—

''(i) the borrower may be entitled to servicemember and veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) and other Federal or State laws; and

''(ii) a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under section 128(e)(15)(I)(i) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(15)(I)(i)) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to such section.''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end the following:

''(F) A statement that—

''(i) the borrower may be entitled to servicemember and veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) and other Federal or State laws; and

''(ii) a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under section 128(e)(15)(I)(i) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(15)(I)(i)) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to such section.''.

SEC. 4. KNOW BEFORE YOU OWE.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO THE TRUTH IN LENDING ACT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 128(e) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)), as amended by section 2, is further amended—

(A) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

''(3) INSTITUTIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIRED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), before a creditor may issue any funds with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection, the creditor shall obtain from the relevant institution of higher education where such loan is to be used for a student, such institution's certification of—

''(i) the enrollment status of the student;

''(ii) the student's cost of attendance at the institution as determined by the institution under part F of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965; and

''(iii) the difference between—

''(I) such cost of attendance; and

''(II) the student's estimated financial assistance, including such assistance received under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and other financial assistance known to the institution, as applicable.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), a creditor may issue funds, not to exceed the amount described in subparagraph (A)(iii), with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection without obtaining from the relevant institution of higher education such institution's certification if such institution fails to provide within 15 business days of the creditor's request for such certification—

''(i) notification of the institution's refusal to certify the request; or

''(ii) notification that the institution has received the request for certification and will need additional time to comply with the certification request.

''(C) LOANS DISBURSED WITHOUT CERTIFICATION.—If a creditor issues funds without obtaining a certification, as described in subparagraph (B), such creditor shall report the issuance of such funds in a manner determined by the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(16) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—

''(A) PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS.—

''(i) LOAN STATEMENT.—A creditor that issues any funds with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection shall send loan statements, where such loan is to be used for a student, to borrowers of such funds not less than once every 3 months during the time that such student is enrolled at an institution of higher education.

''(ii) CONTENTS OF LOAN STATEMENT.—Each statement described in clause (i) shall—

''(I) report the borrower's total remaining debt to the creditor, including accrued but unpaid interest and capitalized interest;

''(II) report any debt increases since the last statement; and

''(III) list the current interest rate for each loan.

''(B) NOTIFICATION OF LOANS DISBURSED WITHOUT CERTIFICATION.—On or before the date a creditor issues any funds with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection, the creditor shall notify the relevant institution of higher education, in writing, of the amount of the extension of credit and the student on whose behalf credit is extended. The form of such written notification shall be subject to the regulations of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

''(C) ANNUAL REPORT.—A creditor that issues funds with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection containing the required information about private student loans to be determined by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education.''.

(2) DEFINITION OF PRIVATE EDUCATION LOAN.—Section 140(a)(7)(A) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1650(a)(7)(A)) is amended—

(A) by redesignating clause (ii) as clause (iii);

(B) in clause (i), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon; and

(C) by adding after clause (i) the following:

''(ii) is not made, insured, or guaranteed under title VII or title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 292 et seq. and 296 et seq.); and''.

(3) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 365 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection shall issue regulations in final form to implement paragraphs (3) and (16) of section 128(e) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)), as amended by paragraph (1). Such regulations shall become effective not later than 6 months after their date of issuance.

(b) AMENDMENTS TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965.—

(1) PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AGREEMENTS.—Section 487(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)) is amended by striking paragraph (28) and inserting the following:

''(28)(A) Upon the request of a private educational lender, acting in connection with an application initiated by a borrower for a private education loan in accordance with section 128(e)(3) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(3)), the institution shall within 15 days of receipt of a certification request—

''(i) provide such certification to such private educational lender—

''(I) that the student who initiated the application for the private education loan, or on whose behalf the application was initiated, is enrolled or is scheduled to enroll at the institution;

''(II) of such student's cost of attendance at the institution as determined under part F of this title; and

''(III) of the difference between—

''(aa) the cost of attendance at the institution; and

''(bb) the student's estimated financial assistance received under this title and other assistance known to the institution, as applicable;

''(ii) notify the creditor that the institution has received the request for certification and will need additional time to comply with the certification request; or ''(iii) provide notice to the private educational lender of the institution's refusal to certify the private education loan under subparagraph (D).

''(B) With respect to a certification request described in subparagraph (A), and prior to providing such certification under subparagraph (A)(i) or providing notice of the refusal to provide certification under subparagraph (A)(iii), the institution shall—

''(i) determine whether the student who initiated the application for the private education loan, or on whose behalf the application was initiated, has applied for and exhausted the Federal financial assistance available to such student under this title and inform the student accordingly; and

''(ii) provide the borrower whose loan application has prompted the certification request by a private education lender, as described in subparagraph (A)(i), with the following information and disclosures:

''(I) The availability of, and the borrower's potential eligibility for, Federal financial assistance under this title, including disclosing the terms, conditions, interest rates, and repayment options and programs of Federal student loans.

''(II) The borrower's ability to select a private educational lender of the borrower's choice.

''(III) The impact of a proposed private education loan on the borrower's potential eligibility for other financial assistance, including Federal financial assistance under this title.

''(IV) The borrower's right to accept or reject a private education loan within the 30-day period following a private educational lender's approval of a borrower's application and about a borrower's 3-day right to cancel period.

''(C) For purposes of this paragraph, the terms 'private educational lender' and 'private education loan' have the meanings given such terms in section 140 of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1650).

''(D)(i) An institution shall not provide a certification with respect to a private education loan under this paragraph unless the private education loan includes terms that provide—

''(I) the borrower alternative repayment plans, including loan consolidation or refinancing; and

''(II) that the liability to repay the loan shall be cancelled upon the death or disability of the borrower or co-borrower.

''(ii) In this paragraph, the term 'disability' means a permanent and total disability, as determined in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary of Education, or a determination by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that the borrower is unemployable due to a service connected-disability.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the effective date of the regulations described in subsection (a)(3).

(3) PREFERRED LENDER ARRANGEMENT.—Section 151(8)(A)(ii) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1019(8)(A)(ii)) is amended by inserting ''certifying,'' after ''promoting,''.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 24 months after the issuance of regulations under subsection (a)(3), the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection and the Secretary of Education shall jointly submit to Congress a report on the compliance of institutions of higher education and private educational lenders with section 128(e)(3) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)), as amended by subsection (a), and section 487(a)(28) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)), as amended by subsection (b). Such report shall include information about the degree to which specific institutions utilize certifications in effectively encouraging the exhaustion of Federal student loan eligibility and lowering student private education loan debt.

SEC. 5. MARKETING LIMITATION.

Section 456 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087f) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) LIMITATION ON CONTRACTS FOR THE SERVICING OF LOANS.—A servicer may not market to the borrower of a student loan made, insured, or guaranteed under this title which the servicer services, a financial product or service using data obtained through the servicing relationship, or otherwise during the servicing process.''.

SEC. 6. SERVICER CHOICE.

Section 456 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087f), as amended by section 5, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) SWITCHING SERVICERS.—The Secretary shall establish a program that allows a borrower of a loan made under this part after the date of enactment of the Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights to switch from the assigned servicer of such loan to a new servicer based on a random reassignment by the Secretary.''.

SEC. 7. CENTRALIZED POINT OF ACCESS.

Part G of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1088 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 493E. CENTRALIZED POINT OF ACCESS.

''Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights, the Secretary shall establish a centralized point of access for all borrowers of loans that are made, insured, or guaranteed under this title that are in repayment, including a central location for account information and payment processing for such loan servicing, regardless of the specific servicer.''.

SEC. 8. REPORT ON STUDENT LOAN SERVICERS.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall submit a report to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives on private and Federal student loan servicers, including—

(1) any legislative recommendations to improve student loan servicing standards; and

(2) information on proactive early intervention methods by servicers to help distressed student loan borrowers enroll in any eligible repayment plans.

By Mrs. ERNST (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 841. A bill to expand eligibility for health care under the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to include certain veterans seeking mental health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, as we begin this week with the serious and necessary discussions about the budget, I rise today to talk about something that is very personal to me, something that is incredibly close to my heart—the service and sacrifice of our Nation's finest men and women, those who serve in our Armed Forces.

As the budget process moves forward, we must ensure that our national security needs are met and that our veterans can receive the much-needed care and assistance they deserve.

Growing up on a farm in rural southwest Iowa, my parents instilled in my sister, my brother, and me the importance of hard work, service, and sacrifice.

In the summer between my freshman and sophomore years at Iowa State University, I was very fortunate to attend an agricultural exchange in Ukraine, when it was still part of the former Soviet Union. The Iowa students and I lived on a collective farm for a number of weeks. In the evening, when the community members came together, we did not talk about agricultural practices, like I anticipated. What we talked about was what it was like to be free, what it was like to be an American. Those were the things the Ukrainians wanted to know. They wanted to know about freedom, our Republic, and democracy. Just a few short years later, they became an independent nation. They are a sovereign nation.

It was then that I better understood what it meant to have freedom and how much people elsewhere truly desire it. I wanted to do my part to ensure our country always remained free.

That realization led me to make a decision when I was 19 years old—to join the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps, commonly known as ROTC.

For over two decades, I have had the great honor of wearing our Nation's uniform. Today, I serve as a lieutenant colonel in the Iowa Army National Guard, and I have been privileged to have led and commanded at many levels, from platoon to battalion. From 2003 to 2004, I served as a company commander in Operation Iraqi Freedom. My unit was tasked with running convoys through Kuwait and southern Iraq.

As a soldier, I learned firsthand the vital role that our citizen soldiers play. Citizen soldiers are folks who train for military duty so they are prepared to defend in the face of an emergency. These men and women take on this task voluntarily and can be called upon to serve at any time.

While overseas, I had the opportunity to serve alongside some of America's finest, our bravest men and women. I saw firsthand how dangerous threats against our Nation can be.

It is becoming increasingly important that our military—Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve—are always working together as one cohesive unit. We are strongest in numbers when working together to build one another up and support one another. Our mission is clear and we come from all corners of the country united on the same goal—to defend our freedom.

I continue to remain focused on strengthening our national security, both in my role in the Iowa National Guard and on the Armed Services Committee, where we discuss ways to support our exceptional military and develop bipartisan strategies to confront terrorism and destroy Al Qaeda, ISIS, and those who are radicalized by them.

Here in the Senate, we also have an incredible responsibility not only to make sure our country is protected but also to ensure we live up to the promises made to our veterans. These men and women are trained and have selflessly sacrificed in defense of our freedoms and our way of life. However, we must ensure that our veterans are prepared to transition back to civilian life. They deserve nothing less than the benefits they were promised and a quality of care we can all be proud of.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case. According to the VA, there are approximately 22 veteran suicides per day. We hear this number from time to time. But think about it—22 veteran suicides per day.

In November 2014 testimony before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, the VA's chief consultant for mental health said the average wait time for a mental health appointment at the VA is 36 days. We can, and must, do better for our veterans.

If a non-VA mental health care professional can reach a veteran 1 day, 1 week or even 2 weeks earlier than 36 days, Congress nor the VA should be an obstacle to affording a veteran potentially lifesaving mental health treatment.

Veterans themselves are the only ones who know their mental health limit, and a veteran should receive the benefit of the doubt about where that limit is—not the VA.

This is an issue that impacts all eras of veterans. Since coming to Washington, I have heard from many veterans on this very issue. One veteran in particular from the Vietnam war era admitted that he had twice attempted suicide. This veteran felt like he didn't have anywhere to go. We have to do better.

Today, as my first piece of legislation in the Senate, I am introducing the Prioritizing Veterans Access to Mental Health Care Act.

This legislation provides an option for our veterans to receive mental health treatment until they can receive comprehensive mental health care at the VA. This authorization for mental health care provides a backstop—other than the emergency room—for our veterans. Ultimately, the ER should not be considered a backstop for delayed mental health care at the VA. Most veterans who seek mental health treatment at emergency rooms do so when they have reached the limits of their suffering.

There is no acceptable VA wait time for mental health care for our veterans. The limits to how much suffering a veteran can endure simply cannot be accurately measured by the VA or by any medical professional.

Specifically, this legislation puts veterans mental health care first and foremost, provides a backstop to VA mental health care, and prioritizes incentives to hire more mental health care professionals at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Prioritizing Veterans Access to Mental Health Care Act does several things.

First, it amends the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to where a veteran is instantly authorized non-VA care if the veteran provides an electronic or hard-copy statement in writing that he or she is not receiving adequate or timely mental health care at the VA. This eliminates the 40-mile and VA wait-time triggers for mental health care under the choice act.

Second, it prioritizes incentives for the hiring of mental health care professionals at the VA.

And third, it provides the VA 90 days to enact the program.

I hope this legislation will receive broad bipartisan support because ensuring our veterans have access to the mental health care they deserve is not a conservative or liberal concept. It is not a Republican or Democrat idea. It is an American value.

If we do not stand up for America's tenacious survivors, who will? Thanks to these brave men and women, we are able to stand on this floor and fight for our beliefs and ideals. These veterans fought for us and defended us tirelessly. They endured more than some of us can ever imagine. The invisible wounds of war can no longer go unnoticed. Now, it is our duty to do all we can to thank them and ensure they have access to the quality mental health care they deserve.

God bless these men and women, and let us strive to do better for them.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS DURING ADJOURNMENT

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 11—SETTING FORTH THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2017 THROUGH 2025

Mr. ENZI from the Committee on the Budget; submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was placed on the calendar:

S. CON. RES. 11

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016.

(a) DECLARATION.—Congress declares that this resolution is the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2016 and that this resolution sets forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this concurrent resolution is as follows:

TITLE I—RECOMMENDED LEVELS AND AMOUNTS

SEC. 101. RECOMMENDED LEVELS AND AMOUNTS.

The following budgetary levels are appropriate for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2025:

(1) FEDERAL REVENUES.—For purposes of the enforcement of this resolution:

(A) The recommended levels of Federal revenues are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $2,666,755,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $2,763,328,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $2,858,131,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $2,974,147,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $3,099,410,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $3,241,963,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $3,388,688,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $3,550,388,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $3,722,144,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $3,905,648,000,000.

(B) The amounts by which the aggregate levels of Federal revenues should be changed are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $0.
Fiscal year 2017: $0.
Fiscal year 2018: $0.
Fiscal year 2019: $0.
Fiscal year 2020: $0.
Fiscal year 2021: $0.
Fiscal year 2022: $0.
Fiscal year 2023: $0.
Fiscal year 2024: $0.
Fiscal year 2025: $0.

(2) NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY.—For purposes of the enforcement of this resolution, the appropriate levels of total new budget authority are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $3,003,274,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $2,894,221,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $2,958,672,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $3,107,799,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $3,228,534,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $3,337,729,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $3,455,558,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $3,525,594,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $3,624,025,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $3,646,263,000,000.

(3) BUDGET OUTLAYS.—For purposes of the enforcement of this resolution, the appropriate levels of total budget outlays are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $3,037,267,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $2,928,317,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $2,945,067,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $3,080,929,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $3,185,512,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $3,308,296,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $3,449,532,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $3,497,247,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $3,576,890,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $3,614,976,000,000.

(4) DEFICITS.—For purposes of the enforcement of this resolution, the amounts of the deficits are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $370,512,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $164,989,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $86,936,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $106,782,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $86,102,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $66,333,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $60,844,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: –$53,141,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: –$145,254,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: –$290,672,000,000.

(5) PUBLIC DEBT.—Pursuant to section 301(a)(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the appropriate levels of the public debt are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $19,009,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $19,396,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $19,718,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $20,055,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $20,375,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $20,676,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $21,008,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $21,195,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $21,254,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $21,207,000,000,000.

(6) DEBT HELD BY THE PUBLIC.—The appropriate levels of debt held by the public are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $13,799,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $14,042,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $14,222,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $14,445,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $14,674,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $14,912,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $15,230,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $15,419,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $15,500,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $15,538,000,000,000.

(7) FEDERAL TAX EXPENDITURES.—The levels of Federal tax expenditures are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016: $1,481,800,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $1,593,500,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $1,670,800,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $1,738,019,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $1,810,158,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $1,890,648,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $1,973,922,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $2,064,520,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $2,160,235,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $2,261,769,000,000.

SEC. 102. SOCIAL SECURITY.

(a) SOCIAL SECURITY REVENUES.—For purposes of Senate enforcement under sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the amounts of revenues of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016: $792,776,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $824,342,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $857,154,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $890,609,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $925,760,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $962,188,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $1,000,637,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $1,040,394,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $1,081,476,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $1,123,748,000,000.

(b) SOCIAL SECURITY OUTLAYS.—For purposes of Senate enforcement under sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the amounts of outlays of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016: $778,032,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $825,829,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $882,521,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $941,034,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $1,005,632,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $1,073,227,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $1,145,188,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $1,222,754,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $1,305,622,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $1,394,327,000,000.

(c) SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—In the Senate, the amounts of new budget authority and budget outlays of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund for administrative expenses are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $5,026,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,089,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $5,175,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,190,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $5,345,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,316,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $5,518,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,487,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $5,699,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,668,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $5,881,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,849,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $6,072,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $6,039,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $6,266,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $6,232,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $6,462,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $6,428,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $6,665,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $6,630,000,000.

SEC. 103. POSTAL SERVICE DISCRETIONARY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.

In the Senate, the amounts of new budget authority and budget outlays of the Postal Service for discretionary administrative expenses are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $267,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $266,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $277,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $277,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $288,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $288,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $299,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $298,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $310,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $310,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $321,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $320,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $334,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $333,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $346,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $345,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $358,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $357,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $371,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $370,000,000.

SEC. 104. MAJOR FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES.

Congress determines and declares that the appropriate levels of new budget authority and outlays for fiscal years 2016 through 2025 for each major functional category are:
(1) National Defense (050):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $620,263,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $605,189,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $544,506,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $576,934,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $557,744,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $558,049,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $571,019,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $564,685,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $585,310,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $573,614,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $599,627,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $586,038,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $600,634,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $596,103,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $615,997,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $603,051,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $631,771,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $611,920,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $648,836,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $632,992,000,000.
(2) International Affairs (150):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $47,791,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $48,227,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $41,839,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $45,656,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $42,802,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $43,642,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $43,749,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $42,565,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $44,754,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $42,437,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $45,276,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $42,795,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $46,553,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $43,424,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $47,593,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $44,153,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $48,681,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $45,023,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $49,786,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $45,943,000,000.
(3) General Science, Space, and Technology (250):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $30,007,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $30,007,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $30,596,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $30,529,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $31,286,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $31,165,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $31,981,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $31,712,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $32,706,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $32,400,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $33,433,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $33,022,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $34,192,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $33,756,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $34,953,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $34,512,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $35,745,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $35,290,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $36,545,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $36,084,000,000.
(4) Energy (270):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, –$1,947,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,365,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $2,483,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,112,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $76,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$731,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $90,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$753,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $128,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$668,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $97,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$543,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $62,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$465,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $36,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$393,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $2,869,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,521,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $2,963,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,655,000,000.
(5) Natural Resources and Environment (300):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $36,277,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $38,983,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $36,685,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $38,866,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $37,680,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $38,719,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $39,125,000,000.

(B) Outlays, $39,486,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $41,066,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $41,098,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $40,951,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $41,232,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $41,844,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $41,992,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $43,240,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $43,467,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $44,125,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $43,663,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $45,522,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $44,966,000,000.
(6) Agriculture (350):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $20,628,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $20,585,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $24,247,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $23,696,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $23,204,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,471,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $22,083,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,401,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $20,974,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $20,498,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $21,078,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $20,613,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $20,914,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $20,476,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $21,506,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,051,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $21,620,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,125,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $21,834,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,416,000,000.
(7) Commerce and Housing Credit (370):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $2,260,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$11,365,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, –$3,959,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$18,302,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, –$1,264,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$16,095,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, –$1,316,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$21,170,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $55,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$20,567,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, –$75,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$15,388,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $1,341,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$15,789,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $2,452,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$15,942,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $3,648,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$16,051,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $4,520,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$16,011,000,000.
(8) Transportation (400):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $71,528,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $88,436,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $72,392,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $83,756,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $73,286,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $80,329,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $74,077,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $79,437,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $74,826,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $78,935,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $75,549,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $78,708,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $76,221,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $78,973,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $76,840,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $79,228,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $77,506,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $79,123,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $78,208,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $79,426,000,000.
(9) Community and Regional Development (450):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $17,388,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,325,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $18,263,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,002,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $18,606,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,457,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $18,862,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,314,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $18,870,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,547,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $18,771,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,474,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $18,782,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,323,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $18,861,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $19,747,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $18,975,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $19,313,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $19,140,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $19,384,000,000.
(10) Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services (500):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $86,251,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $95,717,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $87,848,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $92,889,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $90,703,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $90,534,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $89,535,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $88,889,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $91,991,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $91,556,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $93,353,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $93,315,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $94,970,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $94,734,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $96,575,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $96,383,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $98,439,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $98,178,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $100,362,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $100,129,000,000.
(11) Health (550):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $414,326,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $424,711,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $385,565,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $389,710,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $388,629,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $390,503,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $402,511,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $403,324,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $425,526,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $415,791,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $433,351,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $433,395,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $452,426,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $452,523,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $471,644,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $471,719,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $489,491,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $489,587,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $512,965,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $513,163,000,000.
(12) Medicare (570):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $567,213,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $567,122,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $562,941,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $562,881,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $562,143,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $562,102,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $619,228,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $619,148,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $657,658,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $657,564,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $698,284,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $698,188,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $776,034,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $775,930,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $787,879,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $787,681,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $797,075,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $796,964,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $902,467,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $902,349,000,000.
(13) Income Security (600):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $529,494,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $528,778,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $458,455,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $455,293,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $466,015,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $458,848,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $460,943,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $457,388,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $471,826,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $467,468,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $481,804,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $477,132,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $493,877,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $493,223,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $502,550,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $498,468,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:

(A) New budget authority, $512,932,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $504,310,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $521,641,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $517,044,000,000.
(14) Social Security (650):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $33,878,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $33,919,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $36,535,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $36,535,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $39,407,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $39,407,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $42,634,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $42,634,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $46,104,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $46,104,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $49,712,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $49,712,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $53,547,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $53,547,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $57,455,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $57,455,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $61,546,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $61,546,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $65,751,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $65,751,000,000.
(15) Veterans Benefits and Services (700):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $166,708,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $170,152,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $164,905,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $164,449,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $163,101,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $162,477,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $174,989,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $174,175,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $179,899,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $178,942,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $184,172,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $183,222,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $196,530,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $195,502,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $193,156,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $192,124,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $189,999,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $188,884,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $203,895,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $202,761,000,000.
(16) Administration of Justice (750):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $52,543,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $56,757,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $57,030,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $58,576,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $56,787,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $57,929,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $58,512,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $57,973,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $60,284,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $59,888,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $62,239,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $61,690,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $64,815,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $64,224,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $66,745,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $66,238,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $68,717,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $68,091,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $70,550,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $69,922,000,000.
(17) General Government (800):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $23,755,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $23,708,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $24,046,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $23,958,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $24,755,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $24,573,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $25,485,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $25,089,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $26,202,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $25,782,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $26,958,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $26,551,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $27,766,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $27,375,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $28,493,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $28,114,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $29,022,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $28,671,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $29,809,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $29,399,000,000.
(18) Net Interest (900):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $366,579,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $366,579,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $415,132,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $415,132,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $478,693,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $478,693,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $532,670,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $532,670,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $580,522,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $580,522,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $614,725,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $614,725,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $645,841,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $645,841,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $671,301,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $671,301,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $690,987,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $690,987,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $703,419,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $703,419,000,000.
(19) Allowances (920):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, –$12,271,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$5,520,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $12,975,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,923,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, –$10,750,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$14,755,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, –$15,199,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$16,838,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, –$46,590,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$44,799,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, –$54,803,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$51,787,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, –$98,454,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$80,798,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, –$112,036,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$101,438,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, –$90,119,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$83,225,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, –$250,580,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$234,419,000,000.
(20) Undistributed Offsetting Receipts (950):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, –$69,397,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$69,408,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, –$78,263,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$78,278,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, –$84,231,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$84,250,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, –$83,179,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$83,200,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, –$83,577,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$83,600,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, –$86,773,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$86,798,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, –$92,337,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$92,362,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, –$99,646,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$99,672,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, –$109,004,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$109,030,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, –$121,370,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$121,397,000,000.

TITLE II—RECONCILIATION

SEC. 201. RECONCILIATION IN THE SENATE.

(a) COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.—The Committee on Finance of the Senate shall report changes in laws within its jurisdiction to reduce the deficit by $1,000,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

(b) COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS.—The Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions of the Senate shall report changes in laws within its jurisdiction to reduce the deficit by $1,000,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

(c) SUBMISSIONS.—In the Senate, not later than July 31, 2015, the Senate Committees named in subsections (a) and (b) shall submit their recommendations to the Committee on the Budget of the Senate. Upon receiving all such recommendations, the Committee on the Budget of the Senate shall report to the Senate a reconciliation bill carrying out all such recommendations without any substantive revision.

TITLE III—RESERVE FUNDS

SEC. 301. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INCREASE THE PACE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRIVATE SECTOR JOB CREATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) growing the economy;

(2) creating more private sector jobs and enhancing worker rights such as Davis-Bacon reform and card check;

(3) lowering the after-tax costs of investment, savings, and work;

(4) reducing the costs to business and individuals from the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(5) reducing the costs borne by economic activity in the United States stemming from Federal regulations, including the costs incurred by individuals in complying with Federal law when starting a business;

(6) reducing the costs of frivolous lawsuits;

(7) creating a more competitive financial sector to support economic growth and job creation while enhancing the credit worthiness of lending institutions; or

(8) improving the ability of policy makers to estimate the economic effects of policy change through the enhanced use of economic models and data in scoring legislation;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 302. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO STRENGTHEN AMERICA'S PRIORITIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to enhanced funding for national security or domestic discretionary programs by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 303. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROTECT FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE CHOICES FOR ALL.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) the full repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148; 124 Stat. 119) and the health care-related provisions of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152; 124 Stat. 1029); or

(2) the replacing or reforming the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148; 124 Stat. 119) or the health care-related provisions of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152; 124 Stat. 1029);

by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 304. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving access to affordable health care for low-income children, including the Children's Health Insurance Program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 305. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR OTHER HEALTH REFORMS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) the requirement to individually purchase, or jointly provide, health insurance;

(2) increasing payments under, or permanently reforming or replacing, Medicare payments for providers;

(3) extending expiring health care provisions;

(4) the health care needs of first responders to domestic acts of terror;

(5) improvements in medical research, innovation and safety; or

(6) strengthening program integrity initiatives to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse in Federal health care programs;

by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 306. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR CHILD WELFARE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) child nutrition programs;

(2) replacing ineffective policies and programs with evidence-based alternative that improve the welfare of vulnerable children; or

(3) policies that protect children from sexual predators in our schools or communities;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 307. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR VETERANS AND SERVICEMEMBERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the improvement of the delivery of benefits and services to veterans and servicemembers, including:

(1) eligibility for both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation (concurrent receipt);

(2) the reduction or elimination of the offset between Survivor Benefit Plan annuities and Veterans' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation;

(3) the improvement of disability benefits or the process of evaluating and adjudicating benefit claims for members of the Armed Forces or veterans;

(4) the infrastructure needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including constructing or leasing space, to include leases of major medical facilities, and maintenance of Department facilities;

(5) supporting the transition of servicemembers to the civilian workforce, including by expanding or improving education, job training, and workforce development benefits, or other programs for servicemembers or veterans, which may include streamlining the process associated with Federal and State credentialing requirements;

(6) improving access to and reducing wait times for Department of Veterans Affairs health care, including through hiring medical providers, and improving the quality of such care; or

(7) providing or improving specialty services, including mental health care, homeless services, gender specific health care, fertility treatment, and support for caregivers;

by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 308. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR TAX REFORM AND ADMINISTRATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) reforming the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(2) amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring tax relief provisions;

(3) innovation and high quality manufacturing jobs, including the repeal of the 2.3 percent excise tax on medical device manufacturers; or

(4) operations and administration of the Department of the Treasury,

by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 309. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INVEST IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN AMERICA.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal investment in the infrastructure of the United States by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation shall not include transfers from other trust funds but may include transfers from the general fund of the Treasury that are offset, provided further that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 310. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR AIR TRANSPORTATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal spending on civil air traffic control services, which may include air traffic management at airport towers across the United States or at facilities of the Federal Aviation Administration, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 311. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROMOTE JOBS IN THE UNITED STATES THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) suspending or reducing tariffs on miscellaneous imports;

(2) reauthorization of trade related Federal agencies;

(3) implementing international trade agreements;

(4) reauthorizing preference programs; or

(5) enhancing the protection of United States intellectual property rights at the border and abroad;

by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 312. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISABLED WORKERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the administration of disability benefits and the improved employment of disabled workers by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 313. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REFORM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports that amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 314. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR ENERGY LEGISLATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) reform of the management of civilian and defense nuclear waste;

(2) reform and reauthorization of programs at the Department of Energy related to research and development of alternative or renewable forms of energy, fossil fuel exploration and use, nuclear energy, or the electricity grid;

(3) expansion of North American energy production; or

(4) reform of the permitting and siting processes for energy infrastructure;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 315. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO REFORM ENVIRONMENTAL STATUTES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reform of environmental statutes to promote job growth by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 316. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR WATER RESOURCES LEGISLATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving flood control, expanding opportunities for commercial navigation, and improving the environmental restoration of the nation's waterways without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 317. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND ON MINERAL SECURITY AND MINERAL RIGHTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) reducing reliance on mineral imports; or

(2) the authority to deduct certain amounts from mineral revenues payable to States;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 318. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO REFORM THE ABANDONED MINE LANDS PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1201 et seq.) without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 319. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE FOREST HEALTH.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) increasing timber production from Federal lands and providing bridge funding to counties and other units of local government until timber production levels increase;

(2) decreasing forest hazardous fuel loads;

(3) improving stewardship contracting; or

(4) reform of the process of budgeting for wildfire suppression operations;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 320. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO REAUTHORIZE FUNDING FOR PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES TO COUNTIES AND OTHER UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 321. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR FINANCIAL REGULATORY SYSTEM REFORM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to regulatory relief for small financial firms, improvements in the effectiveness of the financial regulatory framework, enhancements in oversight and accountability of the Federal Reserve System, and expansions in access to capital markets without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 322. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE FEDERAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving the processing of earnings reports for the Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance programs by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 323. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPLEMENT AGREEMENTS WITH FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the implementation of agreements between the United States and nations with whom it maintains a Compact of Free Association without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 324. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROTECT PAYMENTS TO RURAL HOSPITALS AND CREATE SUSTAINABLE ACCESS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting payments to rural hospitals and creating sustainable access for rural communities, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 325. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ENCOURAGE STATE MEDICAID DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE INDEPENDENT LIVING AND INTEGRATED WORK FOR THE DISABLED.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to encouraging State Medicaid demonstration programs to promote independent living and integrated work for the disabled, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 326. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ALLOW PHARMACISTS TO BE PAID FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES UNDER MEDICARE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to payments to pharmacists for the provision of services under Medicare, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 327. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE OUR NATION'S COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to supporting and improving community health centers, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 328. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE FUNDING OF INDEPENDENT AGENCIES, WHICH MAY INCLUDE SUBJECTING THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU TO THE REGULAR APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the funding of independent agencies, which may include subjecting the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to the regular appropriations process without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 329. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR EXPORT PROMOTION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to promoting exports, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase total deficits over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 330. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO REFORM, IMPROVE, AND ENHANCE 529 COLLEGE SAVINGS PLANS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reforms, improvements, and enhancements of 529 college savings plans, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 331. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SECURING OVERSEAS DIPLOMATIC FACILITIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the security of the overseas diplomatic facilities of the United States, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 332. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ACHIEVE SAVINGS BY HELPING STRUGGLING AMERICANS ON THE ROAD TO PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to welfare legislation to help struggling Americans on the road to personal and financial independence, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 333. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO CONSERVING FEDERAL LAND, ENHANCING ACCESS TO FEDERAL LAND FOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND MAKING INVESTMENTS IN COUNTIES AND SCHOOLS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal programs for land and water conservation and acquisition or the preservation, restoration, or protection of public land, oceans, coastal areas, or aquatic ecosystems, making changes to or providing for the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.), making changes to or providing for the reauthorization of the payments in lieu of taxes program under chapter 69 of title 31, United States Code, or making changes to or providing for the reauthorization of both laws, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 334. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROTECT TAXPAYERS FROM IDENTITY FRAUD.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports related to changes at the Internal Revenue Service, which may include establishing a process by which taxpayers may (1) receive notification of tax scams and (2) determine whether a return may have been filed using their personal information, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2021 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 335. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to career and technical education, which may include work- or skills-based learning opportunities or which creates rigorous career and technical education curricula in schools, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 336. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO FEMA PREPAREDNESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to enhancing the preparedness of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to respond to disasters, which may include those on land and in the oceans caused or exacerbated by human-induced climate change, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 337. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO EXPANDING, ENHANCING, OR OTHERWISE IMPROVING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to expanding, enhancing, or otherwise improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 338. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROMOTE THE NEXT GENERATION OF NIH RESEARCHERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to policies and programs that improve opportunities for new biomedical researchers by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 339. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROMOTING MANUFACTURING IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to investment in the manufacturing sector in the United States, which may include educational or research and development initiatives, public-private partnerships, or other programs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 340. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROHIBIT ALIENS WITHOUT LEGAL STATUS IN THE UNITED STATES FROM QUALIFYING FOR A REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to benefits for aliens without legal status in the United States, which may include prohibiting qualification for certain tax benefits without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 341. DEFICIT-REDUCTION RESERVE FUND FOR REPORT ELIMINATION OR MODIFICATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating that achieve savings through the elimination, modification, or the reduction in frequency of congressionally mandated reports from Federal agencies, and reduce the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2021 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025. The Chairman may also make adjustments to the Senate's pay-as-you-go ledger over 6 and 11 years to ensure that the deficit reduction achieved is used for deficit reduction only. The adjustments authorized under this section shall be of the amount of deficit reduction achieved.

SEC. 342. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ADDRESS HEROIN AND PRESCRIPTION OPIOID ABUSE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to addressing heroin and prescription opioid abuse, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 343. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO STRENGTHEN OUR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to strengthening our civilian workforce, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of either the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 344. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE REFORM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving Department of Defense financial management, which may include achieving full auditability or eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 345. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE FEDERAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, JOB TRAINING, AND REEMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reducing inefficient overlap, improving access, and enhancing outcomes with Federal workforce development, job training, and reemployment programs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase total deficits over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 346. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROVIDE ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND INVEST IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) energy efficiency;

(2) the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; or

(3) Federal programs for land and water conservation, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund;

by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 347. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ENABLE GREATER COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND LAW SCHOOL CLINICS SERVING VETERANS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the Department of Veterans Affairs collaboration with law school clinics serving veterans, which may include legislation that supports law school clinics that provide veterans with pro-bono legal support and assistance assembling benefits claims, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2021 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 to 2025.

SEC. 348. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY NUCLEAR WASTE CLEANUP.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels and limits in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports related to Federal investments in the Office of Environmental Management, which may include measures to meet the Federal Government's legacy responsibilities for cleanup of liquid radioactive waste, spent nuclear fuel, transuranic and mixed/low-level waste, or contaminated soil and water, and which may also include measures deactivating and decommissioning excess facilities at 16 nuclear waste sites created by the Manhattan Project and Cold War programs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 349. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INITIATIVES TO BOLSTER RESILIENCE OF MISSION-CRITICAL DEPARTMENT INFRASTRUCTURE TO IMPACTS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE AND ASSOCIATED EVENTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one of more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Department of Defense initiatives to bolster resilience of mission-critical Department infrastructure to impacts from climate change and associated events, including sea-level rise, flooding, and increased storm surge, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 350. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO END OPERATION CHOKE POINT AND PROTECT THE SECOND AMENDMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the Department of Justice, which may include ending of the Operation Choke Point program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 351. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PREVENT THE USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR THE BAILOUT OF IMPROVIDENT STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to a prohibition, except in the case of Federal assistance provided in response to a natural disaster, on any entity of the Federal Government from providing funds to State and local governments to prevent receivership or to facilitate exit from receivership or to prevent default on its obligations by a State government, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

TITLE IV—BUDGET PROCESS

Subtitle A—Budget Enforcement

SEC. 401. EXTENSION OF ENFORCEMENT OF BUDGETARY POINTS OF ORDER IN THE SENATE.

(a) EXTENSION OF CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT OF 1974 POINTS OF ORDER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any provision of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.), subsections (c)(2) and (d)(3) of section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 note) shall remain in effect for purposes of Senate enforcement through September 30, 2025.

(2) REPEAL.—In the Senate, section 205 of S. Con. Res. 21 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2008, shall no longer apply.

(b) OTHER POINTS OF ORDER.—

(1) PAY-AS-YOU-GO.—Section 201(d) of S. Con. Res. 21 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2008, is repealed.

(2) INCREASING SHORT-TERM DEFICIT.—Section 404(e) of S. Con. Res. 13 (111th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2010, is repealed.

SEC. 402. SENATE POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION INCREASING LONG-TERM DEFICITS.

(a) CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ANALYSIS OF PROPOSALS.—The Director of the Congressional Budget Office shall, to the extent practicable, prepare for each bill and joint resolution reported from committee (except measures within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Appropriations), and amendments thereto, amendments between the Houses in relation thereto, and conference reports thereon, an estimate of whether the measure would cause, relative to current law, a net increase in on-budget deficits in excess of $5,000,000,000 in any of the 4 consecutive 10-year periods beginning with the first fiscal year that is 10 years after the budget year provided for in the most recently adopted concurrent resolution on the budget.

(b) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would cause a net increase in on-budget deficits in excess of $5,000,000,000 in any of the 4 consecutive 10-year periods described in subsection (a).

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL IN THE SENATE.—

(1) WAIVER.—Subsection (b) may be waived or suspended only by the affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(2) APPEAL.—An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (b).

(d) LIMITATION.—The provisions of this section shall not apply to any bills, joint resolutions, amendments, motions, amendment between the Houses, or conference reports for which the chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate has made adjustments to the allocations, levels, or limits contained in this resolution pursuant to section 303(1).

(e) DETERMINATIONS OF BUDGET LEVELS.—For purposes of this section, the levels of net deficit increases shall be determined on the basis of estimates provided by the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(f) REPEAL.—In the Senate, section 311 of S. Con. Res. 70 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2009, shall no longer apply.

SEC. 403. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) POINT OF ORDER.—Except as provided in subsection (b), it shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would provide an advance appropriation for a discretionary account.

(2) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''advance appropriation'' means any new budget authority provided in a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for fiscal year 2016 that first becomes available for any fiscal year after 2016, or any new budget authority provided in a bill or joint resolution making general appropriations or continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2017, that first becomes available for any fiscal year after 2017.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—Advance appropriations may be provided—

(1) for fiscal years 2017 and 2018 for programs, projects, activities, or accounts identified in the joint explanatory statement of managers accompanying this resolution under the heading ''Accounts Identified for Advance Appropriations'' in an aggregate amount not to exceed $28,852,000,000 in new budget authority in each year;

(2) for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; and

(3) for the Department of Veterans Affairs for the Medical Services, Medical Support and Compliance, and Medical Facilities accounts of the Veterans Health Administration.

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—

(1) WAIVER.—In the Senate, subsection (a) may be waived or suspended only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(2) APPEAL.—An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

(d) FORM OF POINT OF ORDER.—A point of order under subsection (a) may be raised by a Senator as provided in section 313(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644(e)).

(e) CONFERENCE REPORTS.—When the Senate is considering a conference report on, or an amendment between the Houses in relation to, a bill or joint resolution, upon a point of order being made by any Senator pursuant to this section, and such point of order being sustained, such material contained in such conference report or House amendment shall be stricken, and the Senate shall proceed to consider the question of whether the Senate shall recede from its amendment and concur with a further amendment, or concur in the House amendment with a further amendment, as the case may be, which further amendment shall consist of only that portion of the conference report or House amendment, as the case may be, not so stricken. Any such motion in the Senate shall be debatable. In any case in which such point of order is sustained against a conference report (or Senate amendment derived from such conference report by operation of this subsection), no further amendment shall be in order.

SEC. 404. SUPERMAJORITY ENFORCEMENT OF UNFUNDED MANDATES.

Paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 425(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2

U.S.C. 658d(a)) shall be subject to the waiver and appeal requirements of subsections (c)(2) and (d)(3), respectively, of section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 note).

SEC. 405. REPEAL OF SENATE POINT OF ORDER AGAINST CERTAIN RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION.

Section 202 of S. Con. Res. 21 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2008, shall no longer apply in the Senate.

SEC. 406. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST CHANGES IN MANDATORY PROGRAMS.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''CHIMP'' means a provision that—

(1) would have been estimated as affecting direct spending or receipts under section 252 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 902) (as in effect prior to September 30, 2002) if the provision was included in legislation other than an appropriations bill or joint resolution; and

(2) does not result in a net decrease in outlays over the period of the total of the current year, the budget year, and all fiscal years covered under the most recently adopted concurrent resolution on the budget.

(b) POINT OF ORDER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the Senate, it shall not be in order to consider an appropriations bill or joint resolution, or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or joint resolution, that contains a CHIMP that, if enacted, would cause the total budget authority of all such CHIMPs enacted in relation to a fiscal year to be more than the amount specified in paragraph (2).

(2) AMOUNT.—The amount specified in this paragraph is—

(A) for fiscal year 2016, $19,000,000,000;

(B) for fiscal year 2017, $16,000,000,000;

(C) for fiscal year 2018, $12,000,000,000;

(D) for fiscal year 2019, $8,000,000,000;

(E) for fiscal year 2020, $4,000,000,000; and

(F) for fiscal year 2021, and each fiscal year thereafter, $0.

(c) DETERMINATION.—The determination of whether a provision is subject to a point of order under subsection (b) shall be made by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(d) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (b) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (b).

(e) REPEAL.—In the Senate, section 314 of S. Con. Res. 70 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2009, shall no longer apply.

SEC. 407. PROHIBITION ON AGREEING TO LEGISLATION WITHOUT A SCORE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the Senate, it shall not be in order to vote on passage of matter that requires an estimate described in section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653), unless such estimate was made publicly available on the website of the Congressional Budget Office not later than 28 hours before the time the vote commences.

(b) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—

(1) WAIVER.—In the Senate, subsection (a) may be waived or suspended only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(2) APPEAL.—An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SEC. 408. PROTECTING THE SAVINGS IN REPORTED RECONCILIATION BILLS.

In the Senate, section 310(d)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 641(d)(1)) shall apply and may be waived in accordance with the procedures applicable to a point of order raised under section 310(d)(2) of such Act.

SEC. 409. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST EXCEEDING FUNDS DESIGNATED FOR OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a provision in any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that designates for overseas contingency operations, in accordance with section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)), funds that would cause the total amount of funds designated for overseas contingency operations—

(1) for fiscal year 2016, to be more than $57,997,000,000; or

(2) for fiscal year 2017, to be more than $59,500,000,000.

(b) DETERMINATION.—The determination of whether a provision is subject to a point of order under this section shall be made by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—This section may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under this section.

(d) FORM OF POINT OF ORDER.—A point of order under this section may be raised by a Senator as provided in section 313(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644(e)).

(e) CONFERENCE REPORTS.—When the Senate is considering a conference report on, or an amendment between the Houses in relation to, a bill or joint resolution, upon a point of order being made by any Senator under this section, and such point of order being sustained, such material contained in such conference report or amendment shall be stricken, and the Senate shall proceed to consider the question of whether the Senate shall recede from its amendment and concur with a further amendment, or concur in the House amendment with a further amendment, as the case may be, which further amendment shall consist of only that portion of the conference report or House amendment, as the case may be, not so stricken. Any such motion shall be debatable. In any case in which such point of order is sustained against a conference report (or Senate amendment derived from such conference report by operation of this subsection), no further amendment shall be in order.

SEC. 410. SENATE POINT OF ORDER AGAINST PROVISIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS LEGISLATION THAT CONSTITUTE CHANGES IN MANDATORY PROGRAMS AFFECTING THE CRIME VICTIMS FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the Senate, it shall not be in order to consider any appropriations legislation, including any amendment thereto, motion in relation thereto, or conference report thereon, that includes any provision or provisions affecting the Crime Victims Fund, as defined by section 1402 of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10601), which constitutes a change in a mandatory program that would have been estimated as affecting direct spending or receipts under section 252 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (as in effect prior to September 30, 2002) were they included in legislation other than appropriations legislation. A point of order pursuant to this section shall be raised against such provision or provisions as described in subsections (d) and (e).

(b) DETERMINATION.—The determination of whether a provision is subject to a point of order pursuant to this section shall be made by the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—This section may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under this section.

(d) GENERAL POINT OF ORDER.—It shall be in order for a Senator to raise a single point of order that several provisions of a bill, resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report violate this section. The Presiding Officer may sustain the point of order as to some or all of the provisions against which the Senator raised the point of order. If the Presiding Officer so sustains the point of order as to some of the provisions (including provisions of an amendment, motion, or conference report) against which the Senator raised the point of order, then only those provisions (including provision of an amendment, motion, or conference report) against which the Presiding Officer sustains the point of order shall be deemed stricken pursuant to this section. Before the Presiding Officer rules on such a point of order, any Senator may move to waive such a point of order as it applies to some or all of the provisions against which the point of order was raised. Such a motion to waive is amendable in accordance with rules and precedents of the Senate. After the Presiding Officer rules on such a point of order, any Senator may appeal the ruling of the Presiding Officer on such a point of order as it applies to some or all of the provisions on which the Presiding Officer ruled.

(e) FORM OF THE POINT OF ORDER.—When the Senate is considering a conference report on, or an amendment between the Houses in relation to, a bill or joint resolution, upon a point of order being made by any Senator pursuant to this section, and such point of order being sustained, such material contained in such conference report or amendment shall be stricken, and the Senate shall proceed to consider the question of whether the Senate shall recede from its amendment and concur with a further amendment, or concur in the House amendment with a further amendment, as the case may be, which further amendment shall consist of only that portion of the conference report or House amendment, as the case may be, not so stricken. Any such motion shall be debatable. In any case in which such point of order is sustained against a conference report (or Senate amendment derived from such conference report by operation of this subsection), no further amendment shall be in order.

SEC. 411. ACCURACY IN BUDGET ENFORCEMENT.

(a) TIMING SHIFTS.—

(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''timing shift'' means—

(A) a delay of the date on which outlays flowing from direct spending would otherwise occur from 1 fiscal year to the next fiscal year; or

(B) an acceleration of the date on which revenues would otherwise occur from 1 fiscal year to the previous fiscal year.

(2) SCORING.—In the Senate, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget shall not

count timing shifts in estimating the budgetary effects of a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report for purposes of enforcing—

(A) the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.);

(B) any allocation, aggregate, or level under a concurrent resolution on the budget; or

(C) any written statement submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate that establishes allocations, aggregates, and levels for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

(b) PROHIBITION OF RESCISSIONS THAT DON'T SAVE MONEY.—In the Senate, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget shall not count any rescission of budget authority or contract authority that does not have an effect on outlays in estimating the changes in budget authority, outlays, or revenues of a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report for purposes of enforcing—

(1) the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.);

(2) any allocation, aggregate, or level under a concurrent resolution on the budget; or

(3) any written statement submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate that establishes allocations, aggregates, and levels for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

SEC. 412. FAIR VALUE ESTIMATES.

Any estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office for a bill, joint, resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report under the terms of title V of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), shall include, when practicable, an additional estimate of the cost, measured on a fair value basis, of changes that would affect the amount or terms of new Federal loans or loan guarantees or of modifications to existing Federal loans or loan guarantees arising from the bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report.

SEC. 413. HONEST ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BUDGET.—The term ''budget'' means—

(A) a concurrent resolution on the budget; or

(B) a written statement submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate that establishes allocations, aggregates, and levels for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

(2) BUDGETARY EFFECTS.—The term ''budgetary effects'' means changes in budget authority, outlays, or revenues.

(3) MAJOR LEGISLATION.—

(A) DEFINITION.—The term ''major legislation'' means any bill, resolution, conference report, or treaty—

(i) for which an estimate is prepared under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653) that indicates that not less than 1 of the amounts described in subparagraph (B), before incorporating macroeconomic effects, is greater than $15,000,000,000 in any fiscal year of the estimate; or

(ii) designated as major legislation by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate or the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives.

(B) AMOUNTS.—The amounts described in this subparagraph are—

(i) the sum of the individual positive changes in budgetary effects, not including timing shifts, resulting from such measure; and

(ii) the sum of the absolute value of the individual negative budgetary effects, not including timing shifts, resulting from such measure.

(4) TIMING SHIFTS.—The term ''timing shifts'' means—

(A) a delay of the date on which outlays flowing from direct spending would otherwise occur from one fiscal year to the next fiscal year; or

(B) an acceleration of the date on which revenues would otherwise occur from one fiscal year to the next fiscal year.

(b) REQUIREMENT FOR CBO ESTIMATES.—An estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653) for any major legislation shall provide, in addition to the estimate of budgetary effects without macroeconomic effects, an estimate of the budgetary effects from changes in economic output, employment, interest rates, capital stock, and other macroeconomic variables resulting from the major legislation. The total budgetary effects shall delineate between revenue and outlay effects.

(c) REQUIREMENT FOR JCT ESTIMATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An estimate provided by the Joint Committee on Taxation to the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 201(f) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 601(f)) for any major legislation shall provide an estimate of the distributional effects across income categories resulting from major legislation.

(2) DELINEATION.—The total budgetary effects shall delineate between revenue and outlay effects.

(d) CONTENTS OF ESTIMATES.—An estimate required to be provided under subsection (b) or (c) shall include—

(1) a qualitative assessment of the budgetary effects (including macroeconomic variables described in subsections (b) and (c)) of the major legislation in the 20-fiscal year period beginning after the last fiscal year of the most recently adopted budget that sets forth appropriate levels required under section 301 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 632); and

(2) an identification of the assumptions and the source of data underlying the estimate.

SEC. 414. CURRENCY MODERNIZATION.

In the Senate, for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.), any allocation, aggregate, or level under a concurrent resolution on the budget, or any written statement submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate that establishes allocations, aggregates, and levels for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, any estimate of the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of a provision in a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report relating to a transition from the $1 note to a $1 coin shall—

(1) record the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the provision in the first year in which the provision takes effect;

(2) determine the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the provision based on a net present value estimate of the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the provision over a 30-year period; and

(3) incorporate the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the provision due to behavioral changes.

SEC. 415. CERTAIN ENERGY CONTRACTS.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''covered energy savings contract'' means—

(1) an energy savings performance contract authorized under section 801 of the National Energy Conservation Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 8287); and

(2) a utility energy service contract, as described in the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum on Federal use of energy savings performance contracting, dated July 25, 1998 (M–98–13), and the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum on the Federal use of energy saving performance contracts and utility energy service contracts, dated September 28, 2012 (M–12–21), or any successor to either memorandum.

(b) ESTIMATES.—In the Senate, for purposes of enforcing any point of order established under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.) or any concurrent resolution on the budget, any estimate by the Congressional Budget Office of the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of a provision in a bill, joint resolution, amendment, conference report, or amendment between the Houses modifying the authority to enter, the scope or terms of, or the use of covered energy savings contracts shall—

(1) record in the first year in which the authority would become effective, the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues (as estimated in accordance with paragraph (2)) of any modifications to the authority to enter the covered energy savings contracts;

(2) in estimating the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the legislation, calculate the costs and savings arising from covered contracts on a net present value basis by adding market risk over the useful life of the services or product to the discount rate in section 502(5)(E) of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a(5)(E)); and

(3) classify the effects of the provision to be changes in spending subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subsection (b) shall be construed to modify the methodology for estimating the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of a provision that does not relate to covered energy savings contracts in a bill, joint resolution, amendment, conference report, or amendment between the Houses that contains a provision described in subsection (b).

SEC. 416. LONG-TERM SCORING.

(a) SCORING OF LEGISLATION INCREASING THE DISCRETIONARY SPENDING CAPS.—An estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653) for any bill, resolution, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that increases the discretionary spending limits under section 251(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(c)) shall provide, in addition to the estimate under that section, an estimate of the changes in budget authority, outlays, or revenues under the legislation over the period of fiscal year 2016 through fiscal year 2045.

(b) SCORING OF LEGISLATION RELATING TO THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND.—An estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653) for any bill, resolution, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that transfers amounts from the General Fund of the Treasury to the Highway Trust Fund shall provide, in addition to the estimate under that section, an estimate of the changes in budget authority, outlays, or revenues under the legislation over the period of fiscal year 2016 through fiscal year 2045.

SEC. 417. REQUIRING CLEARER REPORTING OF PROJECTED FEDERAL SPENDING AND DEFICITS.

When the Congressional Budget Office releases its annual update to the Budget and

Economic Outlook, the Congressional Budget Office shall provide a projection of Federal revenues, outlays, and deficits for the 30-year period beginning with the budget year, expressed in terms of dollars and as a percent of gross domestic product, as part of its annual update required by Public Law 93–344.

SEC. 418. REPORTING ON TAX EXPENDITURES.

The Director of the Congressional Budget Office shall include in the report submitted under section 202(e)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 the following:

(1) An estimate of the cost of tax expenditures as a share of gross domestic product for the budget year and the 9 years following the budget year.

(2) Historical data on the cost of tax expenditures as a share of gross domestic product for each fiscal year beginning with fiscal year 1965 and ending with the budget year.

SEC. 419. CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ESTIMATES.

(a) REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTAL ESTIMATES.—In the case of any legislative provision to which this section applies, the Congressional Budget Office shall prepare, to the extent practicable, an estimate of the outlay changes during the second and third decade of enactment.

(b) LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS TO WHICH THIS SECTION APPLIES.—This section shall apply to any spending legislative provision—

(1) which proposes a change or changes to law that the Congressional Budget Office determines has an outlay impact in excess of 0.25 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States during the first decade or in the tenth year; or

(2) with respect to which the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of either the Senate or the House of Representatives has requested an estimate described in subsection (a).

SEC. 420. TO REQUIRE TRANSPARENT REPORTING ON THE ONGOING COSTS AND SAVINGS TO TAXPAYERS OF OBAMACARE.

When the Congressional Budget Office releases its annual update to the Budget and Economic Outlook, the Congressional Budget Office shall report changes in direct spending and revenue associated with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148) and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152), including the net impact on deficits, including both on-budget and off-budget effects, in its annual update required by Public Law 93–344. The information shall be presented in a format similar to that of table 2 of the Congressional Budget Office's March 20, 2010 estimate of the budgetary effects of the Health Care and Educational Reconciliation Act of 2010, in combination with the effects of H.R. 3590, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), as passed by the Senate.

SEC. 421. PROHIBITING THE USE OF GUARANTEE FEES AS AN OFFSET.

In the Senate, for purposes of determining budgetary impacts to evaluate points of order under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, this resolution, any previous budget resolution, and any subsequent budget resolution, provisions contained in any bill, resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that increases or extends the increase of, any guarantee fees of the Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation shall not be scored with respect to the level of budget authority, outlays, or revenues contained in such legislation.

Subtitle B—Other Provisions

SEC. 431. OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE.

In the Senate, all committees are directed to review programs and tax expenditures within their jurisdiction to identify waste, fraud, abuse or duplication, and increase the use of performance data to inform committee work. Committees are also directed to review the matters for congressional consideration identified on the Government Accountability Office's High Risk list and the annual report to reduce program duplication. Based on these oversight efforts and performance reviews of programs within their jurisdiction, committees are directed to include recommendations for improved governmental performance in their annual views and estimates reports required under section 301(d) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 632(d)) to the Committees on the Budget.

SEC. 432. BUDGETARY TREATMENT OF CERTAIN DISCRETIONARY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.

In the Senate, notwithstanding section 302(a)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 633(a)(1)), section 13301 of the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 632 note), and section 2009a of title 39, United States Code, the joint explanatory statement accompanying the conference report on any concurrent resolution on the budget shall include in its allocations under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to the Committees on Appropriations amounts for the discretionary administrative expenses of the Social Security Administration and of the Postal Service.

SEC. 433. APPLICATION AND EFFECT OF CHANGES IN ALLOCATIONS AND AGGREGATES.

(a) APPLICATION.—Any adjustments of allocations and aggregates made pursuant to this resolution shall—

(1) apply while that measure is under consideration;

(2) take effect upon the enactment of that measure; and

(3) be published in the Congressional Record as soon as practicable.

(b) EFFECT OF CHANGED ALLOCATIONS AND AGGREGATES.—Revised allocations and aggregates resulting from these adjustments shall be considered for the purposes of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.) as allocations and aggregates contained in this resolution.

(c) BUDGET COMMITTEE DETERMINATIONS.—For purposes of this resolution the levels of new budget authority, outlays, direct spending, new entitlement authority, revenues, deficits, and surpluses for a fiscal year or period of fiscal years shall be determined on the basis of estimates made by the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

SEC. 434. ADJUSTMENTS TO REFLECT CHANGES IN CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS.

Upon the enactment of a bill or joint resolution providing for a change in concepts or definitions, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may make adjustments to the levels and allocations in this resolution in accordance with section 251(b) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)).

SEC. 435. EXERCISE OF RULEMAKING POWERS.

Congress adopts the provisions of this title—

(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate, and as such they shall be considered as part of the rules of the Senate and such rules shall supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent with such other rules; and

(2) with full recognition of the constitutional right of the Senate to change those rules at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as is the case of any other rule of the Senate.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 107—RECOGNIZING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE IN NEW MEXICO AND COMMEMORATING THE UNIQUE PLACE IN HISTORY, AND NATIONAL SECURITY IMPORTANCE, OF THE RANGE

Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 107

Whereas on September 26, 1945, White Sands Missile Range (at that time, known as ''White Sands Proving Ground'') launched its first rocket, a Tiny Tim Boomer, setting in motion 7 decades of world-renowned development, testing, and launches at White Sands Missile Range;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range exists as the premier research, development, test, and evaluation facility for the United States and excels in supporting missile development and a diversity of other test programs for the Army, Navy, Air Force, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, other government agencies, and private industry;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range employs more than 13,000 civilians and honorable members of the Armed Forces, representing the Army, Navy, and Air Force;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range is recognized as the ''Birthplace of America's Missile and Space Activity'' and holds a unique place in history as the site of the first atomic bomb testing, a site that later became known as the ''Trinity Site National Historic Landmark'';

Whereas White Sands Missile Range remains the largest overland military test range in the United States, occupying 3,200 square miles of southern New Mexico, and the largest airspace controlled by the Department of Defense, comprising 9,600 square miles above ground, where the range conducts unparalleled military testing;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range is increasingly partnering with Holloman Air Force Base and Fort Bliss to ensure that the unique assets of the region are used to the utmost extent to contribute to national security, including support of testing and training that is realistic, large-scale, and joint or combined;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range is a home site of the Network Integration Evaluation, which is a series of semiannual evaluations led by members of the Armed Forces that are designed to further integrate and rapidly progress the tactical network of the Army;

Whereas the most recent iteration of the Network Integration Evaluation occurred in October and November of 2014 and involved 3,900 members of the Armed Forces, allowing the Army to stay on the cutting edge of technology and providing an invaluable resource to national defense;

Whereas the Southern New Mexico–El Paso Joint Land Use Study demonstrates the strong relationship that White Sands Missile Range shares with Holloman Air Force Base and Fort Bliss in western Texas and indicates that the range has an annual economic impact of $1,717,289 on the region;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range has the distinguished honor of hosting the annual Bataan Memorial Death March, which commemorates members of the Armed Forces, and forces from the Philippines, who fought and died defending the Philippines only hours after the start of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and who, after a valiant defense of the Philippines, were captured by the Japanese and forced to march 65 miles without any food, water, or medical care, while the Japanese systematically abused them, leading to the deaths of many of them; and

Whereas the mission of White Sands Missile Range remains as pertinent to national security in 2015 as it was in 1945, and the range should be preserved and strengthened presently and for future generations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commemorates the 70th anniversary of White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico;

(2) expresses gratitude and appreciation to the commanders, members of the Armed Forces, civilians, and other individuals who have contributed to the mission and community of White Sands Missile Range throughout its 70-year history;

(3) recognizes the great impact that White Sands Missile Range has made on national security in the United States, particularly its contributions in missile defense and space technology;

(4) memorializes the sacrifice made by brave members of the Armed Forces, and forces from the Philippines, who defended the Philippines and endured the Bataan Death March; and

(5) encourages the preservation and strengthening of White Sands Missile Range presently and for future generations.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 321. Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 322. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. HATCH)) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by Mr. McConnell to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 323. Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Mr. WYDEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra.

SA 324. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 325. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 326. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 327. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 328. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 329. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 330. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 331. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 332. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 333. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 334. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 335. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 336. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 337. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 338. Mr. MORAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 339. Mr. ROUNDS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 340. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 341. Mr. CASSIDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 342. Mr. SCHATZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 343. Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 344. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 345. Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. COONS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 346. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 347. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COATS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 348. Mr. BOOZMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 321. Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A BIENNIAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to establishing a biennial budget and appropriations process, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 322. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. HATCH)) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF STATES TO PROTECT CITIZENS OF THE STATE FROM DAMAGING REGULATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY PURSUANT TO THE CLEAN AIR ACT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing any State the option of opting out of the requirements of section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7411(d)) if a Governor or legislative body of a State determines that the requirements of that section would increase retail electricity prices with a disproportionate impact on low-income or fixed-income households, present a risk to electric reliability, impair investments in existing electric generating capacity, impair manufacturing and other important sectors of the economy of the State, decrease employment, or decrease State and local revenues, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 323. Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Mr. WYDEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; as follows:

On page 5, line 5, increase the amount by $25,001,000,000.

On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by $51,201,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, increase the amount by $65,879,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by $71,784,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, increase the amount by $72,916,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $73,405,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, increase the amount by $48,535,000,000.

On page 5, line 12, increase the amount by $22,338,000,000.

On page 5, line 13, increase the amount by $7,660,000,000.

On page 5, line 14, increase the amount by $1,755,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $25,001,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by $51,201,000,000.

On page 5, line 20, increase the amount by $65,879,000,000.

On page 5, line 21, increase the amount by $71,784,000,000.

On page 5, line 22, increase the amount by $72,916,000,000.

On page 5, line 23, increase the amount by $73,405,000,000.

On page 5, line 24, increase the amount by $48,535,000,000.

On page 5, line 25, increase the amount by $22,338,000,000.

On page 6, line 1, increase the amount by $7,660,000,000.

On page 6, line 2, increase the amount by $1,755,000,000.

On page 6, line 6, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 7, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 8, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 9, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 10, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 11, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 19, increase the amount by $25,001,000,000.

On page 6, line 20, increase the amount by $51,201,000,000.

On page 6, line 21, increase the amount by $65,879,000,000.

On page 6, line 22, increase the amount by $71,784,000,000.

On page 6, line 23, increase the amount by $72,916,000,000.

On page 6, line 24, increase the amount by $73,405,000,000.

On page 6, line 25, increase the amount by $48,535,000,000.

On page 7, line 1, increase the amount by $22,338,000,000.

On page 7, line 2, increase the amount by $7,660,000,000.

On page 7, line 3, increase the amount by $1,755,000,000.

On page 19, line 3, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 4, increase the amount by $30,000,000.

On page 19, line 7, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 8, increase the amount by $480,000,000.

On page 19, line 10, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 11, increase the amount by $1,530,000,000.

On page 19, line 13, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 14, increase the amount by $2,580,000,000.

On page 19, line 16, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 17, increase the amount by $2,880,000,000.

On page 19, line 19, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 20, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 23, increase the amount by $2,970,000,000.

On page 20, line 1, increase the amount by $2,520,000,000.

On page 20, line 5, increase the amount by $1,470,000,000.

On page 20, line 9, increase the amount by $420,000,000.

On page 20, line 13, increase the amount by $114,000,000,000.

On page 20, line 14, increase the amount by $7,570,000,000.

On page 20, line 17, increase the amount by $114,000,000,000.

On page 20, line 18, increase the amount by $9,760,000,000.

On page 20, line 21, increase the amount by $114,000,000,000.

On page 20, line 22, increase the amount by $10,380,000,000.

On page 20, line 25, increase the amount by $11,000,000,000.

On page 21, line 1, increase the amount by $10,650,000,000.

On page 21, line 4, increase the amount by $11,000,000,000.

On page 21, line 5, increase the amount by $10,660,000,000.

On page 21, line 8, increase the amount by $11,000,000,000.

On page 21, line 9, increase the amount by $10,660,000,000.

On page 21, line 13, increase the amount by $3,090,000,000.

On page 21, line 17, increase the amount by $900,000,000.

On page 21, line 21, increase the amount by $280,000,000.

On page 21, line 25, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 23, line 20, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 23, line 21, increase the amount by $17,000,000.

On page 23, line 24, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 23, line 25, increase the amount by $177,000,000.

On page 24, line 3, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 24, line 4, increase the amount by $360,000,000.

On page 24, line 7, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 24, line 8, increase the amount by $627,000,000.

On page 24, line 10, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 24, line 11, increase the amount by $885,000,000.

On page 24, line 13, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 24, line 14, increase the amount by $968,000,000.

On page 24, line 18, increase the amount by $983,000,000.

On page 24, line 22, increase the amount by $823,000,000.

On page 25, line 1, increase the amount by $640,000,000.

On page 25, line 5, increase the amount by $373,000,000.

On page 25, line 9, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 25, line 10, increase the amount by $14,494,000,000.

On page 25, line 13, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 25, line 14, increase the amount by $37,754,000,000.

On page 25, line 17, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 25, line 18, increase the amount by $50,344,000,000.

On page 25, line 21, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 25, line 22, increase the amount by $54,432,000,000.

On page 25, line 25, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 26, line 1, increase the amount by $54,806,000,000.

On page 26, line 4, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 26, line 5, increase the amount by $54,962,000,000.

On page 26, line 9, increase the amount by $40,517,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, increase the amount by $17,260,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, increase the amount by $4,670,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, increase the amount by $582,000,000.

On page 27, line 2, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 3, increase the amount by $2,890,000,000.

On page 27, line 6, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 7, increase the amount by $3,030,000,000.

On page 27, line 10, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 11, increase the amount by $3,265,000,000.

On page 27, line 14, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 15, increase the amount by $3,495,000,000.

On page 27, line 18, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 19, increase the amount by $3,685,000,000.

On page 27, line 22, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 23, increase the amount by $3,815,000,000.

On page 28, line 3, increase the amount by $975,000,000.

On page 28, line 7, increase the amount by $835,000,000.

On page 28, line 11, increase the amount by $600,000,000.

On page 28, line 15, increase the amount by $370,000,000.

SA 324. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE STRENGTHENING OF PATENT RIGHTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the strengthening of patent rights, which is a critical component of the American innovation economy, including our ability to find cures to terrible diseases and create breakthroughs in science and technology by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 325. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ______. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO A STRONG CIVIL COURTS SYSTEM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to a strong civil courts system, including appropriate civil discovery and the right of trial by jury, which are indispensable constitutional safeguards of personal liberty, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 326. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING THAT CHANGES TO VOTING LAWS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL DO NOT DISPROPORTIONATELY BURDEN THE RIGHT OF RACIAL AND LANGUAGE MINORITIES TO VOTE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that changes to voting laws at the State and local level do not disproportionately burden the right of racial and language minorities to vote by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 327. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR FUNDING TO IMPROVE VOTER REGISTRATION AND THE VOTING EXPERIENCE IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports that provides sufficient funding to improve voter registration and the voting experience in Federal elections, by the amounts provided by such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 328. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON COST SHARING REQUIREMENTS OF HOLLINGS MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP.

It is the sense of Congress that the cost sharing requirements of Hollings Manufacturing Extension Centers under the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership program after their third year of operation under such program should be reduced to 50 percent of the costs incurred by the centers under the program.

SA 329. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENCOURAGING THE USE OF EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL AND DUAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to encouraging the widespread use of early college high schools and dual and concurrent enrollment, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 330. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCENTIVES FOR MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES TO HAVE AND MAINTAIN AN ADVANCE CARE PLAN.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to incentives for Medicare beneficiaries to have and maintain an advance care plan by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 331. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HIV PATIENTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to eliminating laws that discriminate against HIV patients without scientific merit because such laws are harmful and perpetuate dangerous stigmas, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 332. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. STATUTORY LIMIT ON PUBLIC DEBT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016.

(a) INCREASE IN STATUTORY LIMIT ON PUBLIC DEBT.—If this resolution sets forth, as the appropriate level of the public debt for fiscal year 2016, an amount that is different from the amount of the statutory limit on the public debt that otherwise would be in effect for fiscal year 2016, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate and the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives shall each introduce a joint resolution increasing or decreasing, as the case may be, the statutory limit on public debt in the form prescribed in subsection (c) and move to proceed to such joint resolution. The motion is highly privileged in the House of Representatives and is privileged in the Senate and is not debatable. The motion is not subject to amendment, or to a motion to postpone, or to a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business. If the Chairman makes such a motion to proceed to the joint resolution, the motion to proceed shall be agreed to with out intervening action or debate.

(b) VOTE ON PASSAGE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Immediately after the Senate or House of Representatives proceeds to a joint resolution under subsection (a), a vote on passage of the joint resolution shall occur without any intervening action or debate. An affirmative vote of a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives or of the Senate, as the case may be, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required for adoption of the joint resolution.

(2) AMENDMENTS.—No amendment to a joint resolution described in subsection (a) shall be in order in the Senate or the House of Representatives.

(3) TRANSMITTAL TO OTHER HOUSE OF CONGRESS.—If a joint resolution is adopted under paragraph (1), the engrossed copy shall be signed by the Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House of Representatives, as the case may be, and transmitted to the other House of Congress for further legislative action.

(4) COORDINATION WITH ACTION BY OTHER HOUSE.—If before adopting a joint resolution under paragraph (1), one House receives from the other a joint resolution described in subsection (a)—

(A) the joint resolution of the other House shall not be referred to a committee; and

(B) the procedure in the receiving House shall be the same as if no joint resolution had been received from the other House until the vote on passage, when the joint resolution received from the other House shall supplant the joint resolution of the receiving House.

(c) JOINT RESOLUTION.—The matter after the resolving clause in a joint resolution described in subsection (a) shall be as follows: ''That subsection (b) of section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking out the dollar limitation contained in such subsection and inserting '$__________'.'', with the blank being filled with a dollar limitation equal to the appropriate level of the public debt set forth pursuant to this resolution.

(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''statutory limit on the public debt'' means the maximum face amount of obligations issued under authority of chapter 31 of title 31, United States Code, and obligations guaranteed as to principal and interest by the United States (except such guaranteed obligations as may be held by the Secretary of the Treasury) that may be outstanding at any one time, as determined under section 3101(b) of such title after the application of section 3101(a) of such title, and as adjusted under section 3101A of such title, section 2 of the No Budget, No Pay Act of 2013 (31 U.S.C. 3101 note), the Default Prevention Act of 2013 (31 U.S.C. 3101 note), and any other Act providing for the adjustment of such amount.

SA 333. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT FINANCE INSTITUTIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to United States Government development finance institutions, which may include an entity that mobilizes private capital to help solve critical development challenges or works with the United States private sector to help United States businesses gain footholds in emerging markets to catalyze revenues, jobs, and growth opportunities at home and abroad, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 334. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CALL RESPONSE TIME AT THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to supporting efforts to improve call response time at the Internal Revenue Service by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 335. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO FULFILLING THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that the United States fulfills all of the obligations of the United States and does not default on the debt of the United States by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 336. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

It is the sense of the Senate that the United States should fulfill all of the obligations of the United States and that the United States should not default on the debt of the United States.

SA 337. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO FEDERAL CYBERSECURITY STANDARDS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal cybersecurity standards, which may include Federal cyber supply chain management or transparency, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 338. Mr. MORAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal investments in biomedical research, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 339. Mr. ROUNDS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROVIDING MORTGAGE LENDING TO RURAL AREAS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing mortgage lending to rural areas by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 340. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 54, strike lines 1 through 3 and insert the following:

(1) extending eligibility for concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and veterans' disability compensation or expanding eligibility for Combat-Related Special Compensation to permit additional disabled retirees to receive both disability compensation and retired pay;

SA 341. Mr. CASSIDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE PROMOTION OF UNITED STATES OFFSHORE ENERGY PRODUCTION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the expansion of United States offshore energy production that would result in American job growth, lower energy prices, economic growth, and stronger national security by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 342. Mr. SCHATZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to achieving theatre security cooperation goals, which may include funding for the National Guard State Partnership Program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 343. Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PRESERVING MANDATORY APPROPRIATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the importance of preserving mandatory appropriations for agricultural conservation programs, which may include financial and technical assistance, conservation easements, and working land management assistance, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 344. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO IMPORTANCE OF FULLY UTILIZING AVAILABLE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR WATER RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT TO MEET NEEDS OF UNITED STATES PORTS AND HARBOR MAINTENANCE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the importance of fully utilizing available Federal funding for water resources and development to meet the needs of United States ports and harbor maintenance, which may include funding available through trust fund accounts by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 345. Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. COONS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCREASING FUNDING FOR FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN BIOMEDICAL AND BASIC SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increasing funding for Federal investments in scientific research, which may include helping find cures for life-threatening and chronic illnesses, increasing our national security, supporting new energy technologies, or supporting innovative solutions that advance private sector efforts to grow the economy and create millions of middle jobs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 346. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 58, between lines 6 and 7, insert the following:

(4) reauthorizing or extending trade adjustment assistance programs;

SA 347. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COATS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO KEEPING THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT FOCUSED ON THE PROTECTION OF WATER QUALITY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that Federal jurisdiction under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) is focused on water quality, which may include limiting jurisdiction based on the movement of birds, mammals, or insects through the air or over the land, the movement of water through the ground, or the movement of rainwater or snowmelt over the land, or limiting jurisdiction over puddles, isolated ponds, roadside ditches, irrigation ditches, stormwater systems, wastewater systems, or water delivery, reuse, or reclamation systems, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 348. Mr. BOOZMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REFORMING OFFICES OF INSPECTORS GENERAL AND PREVENTING EXTENDED VACANCIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to strengthening and reforming Federal Offices of Inspectors General, reducing vacancies in such Offices, and providing for improvements in the overall economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of Inspectors General by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dan Kowalski and Greg Dean from my staff and Mike Jones and Josh Smith from the Democratic staff be given all-access floor passes for the Senate floor during consideration of the budget resolution, S. Con. Res. 11.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that David Ditch and Hannah Oh be granted the privileges of the floor during the consideration of S. Con. Res. 11 and votes that may occur in relation thereto.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator SANDERS, I ask unanimous consent that Claire Mahoney and Keri Rice, OMB detailees to the Budget Committee, be granted floor privileges during the consideration of S. Con. Res. 11.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator WYDEN, I ask unanimous consent that the following fellows be granted floor privileges for the first session of the 114th Congress: Rebecca Farr, Elizabeth Rigby, and Patrick Bussard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority and minority leaders of the Senate and the Speaker and minority leader of the House of Representatives, pursuant to Section 301 of Public Law 104–1, as amended by Public Law 108–349, and as further amended by Public Law 114–6, announces the joint reappointment of the following individuals as members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance: Alan V. Friedman of California, Susan S. Robfogel of New York, and Barbara Childs Wallace of Mississippi.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, March 24; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 11; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings and that all time during the recess count against the time remaining on the budget resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Senators should expect a rollcall vote in relation to the pending Sanders amendment at around 12 noon tomorrow.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator INHOFE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

PILOT'S BILL OF RIGHTS 2

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I would like to make a comment about some legislation that we introduced last week that is going to be of supreme interest to a relatively small number of people—those people in America who are general aviation pilots. It actually affects other people too. This is something which is very significant, and I want to talk about it for a minute.

It is important to pilots and aviation enthusiasts all over the Nation. But over the course of my time, I can recall when there were so few of us who were active commercial pilots, and those individuals who had problems—particularly in our State of Oklahoma—would all come to me because they knew I had understanding of this. So people have come in for help.

One such person was Bob Hoover. Bob Hoover arguably may have been the best pilot of his time. He is still flying today. I guess he is in his nineties by now. But about 10, 15 years ago, one inspector didn't like something he did, and he took away his license.

There are literally thousands of people who make their living as airline pilots. In the case of Bob Hoover, he is the guy who would go up in a Shrike—Chris, do you know what a Shrike is? A Shrike is a twin-engine airplane. I used to own a Shrike. It is made by Aero Commander. He would put a glass of water up here on the top of the dash. He would do a barrel roll, and the water would not tip over. This guy was just incredible.

Anyway, it took an act of Congress that I introduced and passed to get him back into the air. That is why this is so important to a lot of people.

I never realized, even though I personally helped a lot of people who were having problems with their regulations and with an alleged offense by the FAA until it happened to me—when it happened to me, all of a sudden I realized just how frustrating and drawn-out the process could be.

In 2011, I introduced the Pilot's Bill of Rights. I did that to address some serious deficiencies in the relationship between pilots and the FAA. There are a lot of really great people, certainly, in the FAA. The occupier of the chair right now and I both are aware of this. In Oklahoma City, we have several hundred such people. They are easy to get along with and are not overbearing. But any bureaucracy can have a few people who merely want to create problems and say no.

So we introduced the Pilot's Bill of Rights—this was in August of 2012—to ensure that pilots, like everyone else, would be treated fairly and equitably in our justice system. I think pilots are the last group of people who fall into that category we see so prominently in other countries where you are guilty until proven innocent.

Anyway, we passed the Pilot's Bill of Rights, and there are a few things in there that did not get the congressional intent that was originally meant to be. To remedy this, we introduced S. 571. It is the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2. It is bipartisan. Right now, we are sitting on 12 Republicans and 12 Democrats who will be cosponsors of this bill. There are eight sections in the bill, three general subject areas.

First, the legislation reforms FAA's overly burdensome medical certification process by expanding an existing exemption for light sport aircraft pilots to include more qualified, trained pilots.

Let me speak for a moment on the safety concerns. There is a small minority of people who think that expanding an exemption like this automatically decreases safety. That is not true of this bill. I have the numbers to show it.

In 2004, the FAA issued a medical exemption for pilots of light sport aircraft. These are aircraft which weigh less than 1,320 pounds and only have two seats. They had several restrictions. In the entire country, there are about 9,500 of them. It has been over 10 years since the FAA issued this exemption, and since then, not a single accident by a light sport aircraft has occurred that was related to a medical deficiency.

A joint study was done by the AOPA, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, and the EAA, the Experimental Aircraft Association, on the 46,000 aviation accidents that occurred from 2008 to 2012. Of those, only 99 had a medical cause as a factor. That is less than one-quarter of 1 percent of all accidents. Of those 99, none would have been prevented by the current third-class medical screening exemption that was in the process at that time.

Extending that medical exemption for light sport aircraft to include planes weighing up to 6,000 pounds with up to six total passengers, including the pilot, would add airman and aircraft to an existing FAA-approved medical standard—without degrading or creating substandard safety. This approach has been endorsed by the Flying Physicians Association and the AOPA Medical Advisory Board. Both organizations are made up of pilots who are also medical doctors.

This bill does not change the certification standards to obtain a pilot's certificate, and all pilots still have to possess a pilot certificate and pass the required practical test in flying. The bill does create consistency for aviators across the country, where inconsistency has been felt.

The second thing is—in fact, I would say this: We have documented cases where you have two people who have the same medical problem—one in Detroit and one in Tulsa, OK—and they are treated completely differently by the medical doctors where they are examined.

The second thing it does is it extends the due process rights preserved in the original Pilot's Bill of Rights to all FAA certificate holders. This would be other people who are holding FAA certificates, and it is not necessarily a pilot's certificate.

When Congress passed the original Pilot's Bill of Rights, we intended to allow pilots to appeal a decision by the FAA to the National Transportation Safety Board, the NTSB, and then pilots could appeal to a Federal court. We did this because the review by the Federal district court is a de novo. That means they start with the pilot getting a whole new trial, not using the same evidence as was used before the FAA or the NTSB.

In two separate cases, Federal district courts ruled that my original bill did not require a full hearing of the facts. This legislation explicitly spells out the option to appeal an FAA enforcement action to Federal district court for a guaranteed de novo trial, meaning a new and independent review of the facts is guaranteed for these individuals.

This legislation also increases transparency for all FAA certificate holders subject to an investigation or enforcement action by holding FAA accountable for communicating with certificate holders. The FAA is now required to articulate a specific description of an accident or incidents under investigation to parties involved in the investigation and provide specific documentation relevant to the investigation.

While this is something that has happened in many cases, it has not happened in all of them. This bill ensures that certificate holders—these are pilots who are under investigation—are afforded basic fairness. They know why they are being investigated. They have the appropriate documentation to prepare a proper defense and can respond to the FAA from a position of knowledge and certainty in all cases.

I speak from personal experience. This happened to me when I was trying to land in South Texas. They claimed I was not cleared to land. It took me 4 months to get a recording of the particular person who happened to be at the approach control and cleared me to land.

I am a U.S. Senator, and it took 4 months for me to get it, so I figured others might not ever be able to wait this out, and they would have lost their certificate. As I say, it is not a big deal to the general public, but it is to anyone who is a pilot.

I am expanding the original Pilot's Bill of Rights to increase transparency for pilots and certificate holders so they have information and resources to defend themselves should it be necessary.

The third thing it does is it expedites the updates of the notice to airmen—a NOTAM. A NOTAM is a notice to an airman, and it is something that has historically been the responsibility of the FAA. If there is a problem on a runway where we are going to land—if it is going to be closed or they are doing repairs or something like that—they have to publish a NOTAM, in theory. However, in practice, it doesn't work that way.

In my case they claimed there was a NOTAM indicating that the runway I had to land on was closed. However, there was never a NOTAM. They said there was a NOTAM, and you just have to take their word for it.

The Pilot's Bill of Rights No. 1 was supposed to force the FAA to publish NOTAMs in a common place where people would know where they are, and they just have not done it. Now we have strengthened that to say if a NOTAM action is not placed where it can be found, then they cannot use that as an enforcement action against a pilot. So that should resolve the problem.

Fourth, the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 extends liability protection to individuals designated by the FAA, such as aviation medical examiners, pilot examiners, and other individuals. That was the intent of the original one, but it was not specific. This has given a lot of individuals willing to serve as designees a disincentive. My bill removes the disincentive, ensuring increased access to medical professionals and designees to sign off on check rides and flightworthiness of experimental aircraft and all of that. So they would get the same protection.

It is kind of the Good Samaritan law. There are a lot of times when pilots are notified and asked to use their aircraft to help some worthy cause. I can remember one time down on the island just off of Caracas, Venezuela, it had been wiped out by a tornado. This was many years ago. So I took 14 airplanes down there to help those people out. If something happened to one of the airplanes and caused someone's injury or something, then they would not be protected. They didn't have a Good Samaritan law. A lot of people will not do this. People have actually lost their lives because they didn't get the help they needed because people would not volunteer their equipment to help people. So we have a Good Samaritan law and that should take care of that problem.

Many times I have seen when people are inspired as a volunteer—I have done the same thing myself—but there is a disincentive to do that. So the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 is sensitive to the needs of pilots, airmen, and the general aviation community, and they have worked closely with me on it.

I have to say that the OPA and the EAA have worked all the way through this thing and they are fully supportive, as are all their individuals. In fact, I don't know of anyone in the aviation community who is not fully supportive of this.

We have introduced this bill. It is bipartisan. It is something that Senators MANCHIN and BOOZMAN—they are the cochairs of the Senate General Aviation Caucus, and they are cosponsors of this bill.

I encourage Members—hopefully this will go to the commerce committee and we will be able to get a hearing on it very soon.

The House Members are waiting for it to come over, and we are anxious to get this bill passed. I know this is something that is not of concern to an awful lot of people in this country, but I can tell you it is a big concern to people who are pilots.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 24, 2015, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate March 23, 2015:

FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

WILLIAM P. DOYLE, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSIONER FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2018.